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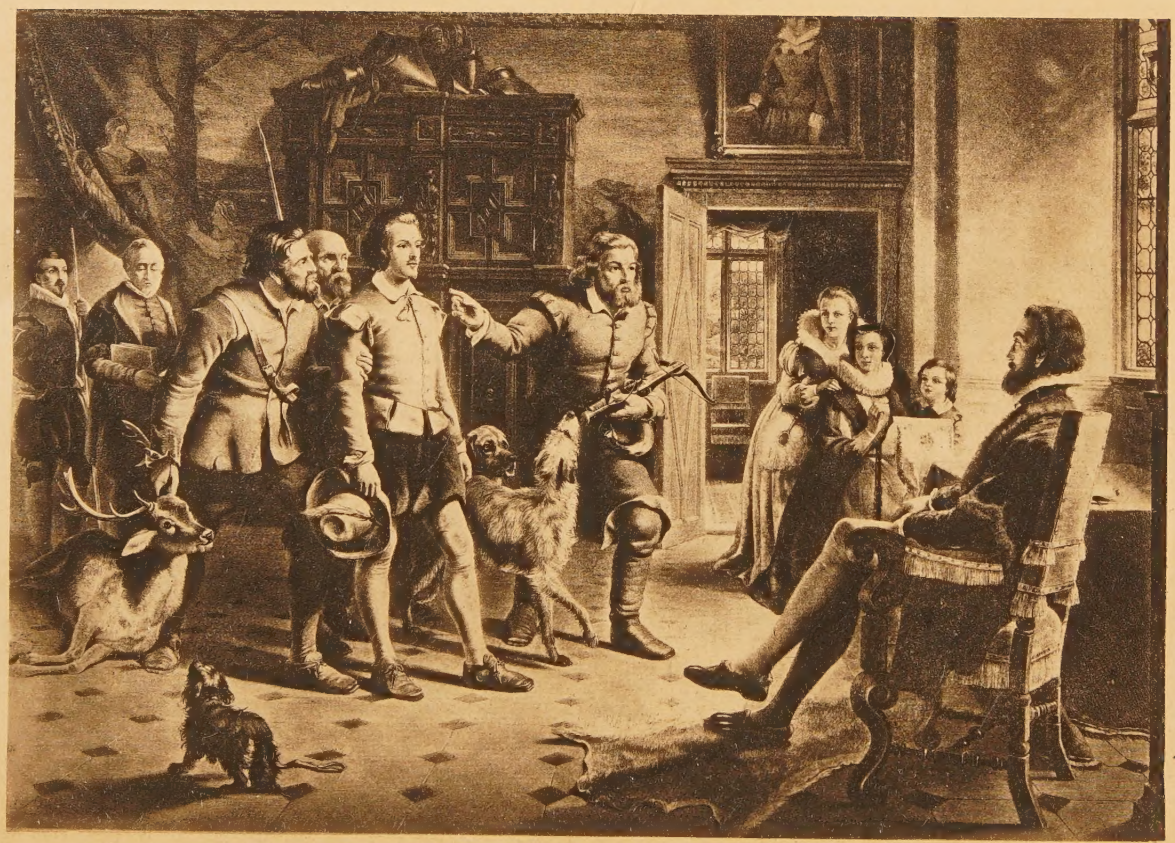

HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

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WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY

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BOOK II.—THE RENAISSANCE

(Continued)

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BOOK II.—THE RENAISSANCE

(Continued)

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HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

CHAPTER FIFTH

THE CHRISTIAN RENAISSANCE

Section I.—Decay of the Southern Civilizations

I WOULD have my reader fully understand," says Luther in the preface to his complete works, " that I have been a monk and a bigoted Papist, so intoxicated, or rather so swallowed up in papistical doctrines, that I was quite ready, if I had been able, to kill or procure the death of those who should have rejected obedience to the Pope by so much as a syllable. I was not all cold or all ice in the Pope's defence, like Eckius and his like, who veritably seemed to me to constitute themselves his defenders rather for their belly's sake than because they looked at the matter seriously. More, to this day they seem to mock at him, like Epicureans. I for my part proceeded frankly, like a man who has horribly feared the day of judgment, and who yet hoped to be saved with a shaking of all his bones." Again, when he saw Rome for the first time, he prostrated himself, saying, " I salute thee, holy Rome . . . bathed in the blood of so many martyrs." Imagine, if you may, the effect which the shameless paganism of the Italian Renaissance had upon such a mind, so loyal, so Christian. The beauty of art, the charm of a refined and sensuous existence, had taken no hold upon him; he judged morals, and he judged them with his conscience only. He regarded this southern civilization with the eyes of a man of the north, and understood its vices only, like Ascham, who said he had seen in Venice " more libertie to sinne in IX dayes than ever I heard tell of in our noble Citie of London in IX yeare." [1] Like Arnold and Channing in the present day, like all the men

[1] Roger Ascham, " The Scholemaster " (1570), ed. Arber, 1870, book i., p. 83.

of Germanic [2] race and education, he was horrified at this voluptuous life, now reckless and now licentious, but always void of moral principles, given up to passion, enlivened by irony, caring only for the present, destitute of belief in the infinite, with no other worship than that of visible beauty, no other object than the search after pleasure, no other religion than the terrors of imagination and the idolatry of the eyes.

"I would not," said Luther afterwards, "for a hundred thousand florins have gone without seeing Rome; I should always have doubted whether I was not doing injustice to the Pope. The crimes of Rome are incredible; no one will credit so great a perversity who has not the witness of his eyes, ears, personal knowledge. . . . There reigned all the villanies and infamies, all the atrocious crimes, in particular blind greed, contempt of God, perjuries, sodomy. . . . We Germans swill liquor enough to split us, whilst the Italians are sober. But they are the most impious of men; they make a mock of true religion, they scorn the rest of us Christians, because we believe everything in Scripture. . . . There is a saying in Italy which they make use of when they go to church: 'Come and let us conform to the popular error.' 'If we were obliged,' they say again, 'to believe in every word of God, we should be the most wretched of men, and we should never be able to have a moment's cheerfulness; we must put a good face on it, and not believe everything.' This is what Leo X did, who, hearing a discussion as to the immortality or mortality of the soul, took the latter side. 'For,' said he, 'it would be terrible to believe in a future state. Conscience is an evil beast, who arms man against himself.' . . . The Italians are either epicureans or superstitious. The people fear St. Anthony and St. Sebastian more than Christ, because of the plagues they send. This is why, when they want to prevent the Italians from committing a nuisance anywhere, they paint up St. Anthony with his fiery lance. Thus do they live in extreme superstition, ignorant of God's word, not believing the resurrection of the flesh, nor life everlasting, and fearing only temporal evils. Their blasphemy also is frightful, . . . and the cruelty of their revenge is atrocious. When they cannot get rid of their enemies in any other way, they lay ambush for them in the churches, so that one man

[2] See, in "Corinne," Lord Nevil's judgment on the Italians.

cleft his enemy's head before the altar. . . . There are often murders at funerals on account of inheritances. . . . They celebrate the Carnival with extreme impropriety and folly for several weeks, and they have made a custom of various sins and extravagances at it, for they are men without conscience, who live in open sin, and make light of the marriage tie. . . . We Germans, and other simple nations, are like a bare clout; but the Italians are painted and speckled with all sorts of false opinions, and disposed still to embrace many worse. . . . Their fasts are more splendid than our most sumptuous feasts. They dress extravagantly; where we spend a florin on our clothes, they put down ten florins to have a silk coat. . . . When they (the Italians) are chaste, it is sodomy with them. There is no society amongst them. No one trusts another; they do not come together freely, like us Germans; they do not allow strangers to speak publicly with their wives: compared with the Germans, they are altogether men of the cloister." These hard words are weak compared with the facts.[3] Treasons, assassinations, tortures, open debauchery, the practice of poisoning, the worst and most shameless outrages, are unblushingly and publicly tolerated in the open light of heaven. In 1490, the Pope's vicar having forbidden clerics and laics to keep concubines, the Pope revoked the decree, "saying that that was not forbidden, because the life of priests and ecclesiastics was such that hardly one was to be found who did not keep a concubine, or at least who had not a courtesan." Cæsar Borgia at the capture of Capua "chose forty of the most beautiful women, whom he kept for himself; and a pretty large number of captives were sold at a low price at Rome." Under Alexander VI, "all ecclesiastics, from the greatest to the least, have concubines in the place of wives, and that publicly. If God hinder it not," adds the historian, "this corruption will pass to the monks and religious orders, although, to confess the truth, almost all the monasteries of the town have become bawd-houses, without any one to speak against it." With respect to Alexander VI, who loved his daughter Lucretia, the reader may find in Burchard the description of the marvellous orgies in which he joined with Lucretia and Cæsar, and the enumeration of the prizes which he dis-

[3] See "Corpus historicorum medii ævi," G. Eccard, vol. ii.; Joh. Burchardi, high chamberlain to Alexander VI, "Diarium," p. 2134. Guicciardini, "Dell'istoria d'Italia," p. 211, ed. Panthéon Littéraire.

tributed. Let the reader also read for himself the story of the bestiality of Pietro Luigi Farnese, the Pope's son, how the young and upright Bishop of Fano died from his outrage, and how the Pope, speaking of this crime as "a youthful levity," gave him in this secret bull "the fullest absolution from all the penalties which he might have incurred by human incontinence, in whatever shape or with whatever cause." As to civil security, Bentivoglio caused all the Marescotti to be put to death; Hippolyto d'Este had his brother's eyes put out in his presence; Cæsar Borgia killed his brother; murder is consonant with their public manners, and excites no wonder. A fisherman was asked why he had not informed the governor of the town that he had seen a body thrown into the water; "he replied that he had seen about a hundred bodies thrown into the water during his lifetime in the same place, and that no one had ever troubled himself about it." "In our town," says an old historian, "much murder and pillage was done by day and night, and hardly a day passed but some one was killed." Cæsar Borgia one day killed Peroso, the Pope's favorite, between his arms and under his cloak, so that the blood spurted up to the Pope's face. He caused his sister's husband to be stabbed and then strangled in open day, on the steps of the palace; count, if you can, his assassinations. Certainly he and his father, by their character, morals, complete, open and systematic wickedness, have presented to Europe the two most successful images of the devil. To sum up in a word, it was on the model of this society, and for this society, that Machiavelli wrote his "Prince." The complete development of all the faculties and all the lusts of man, the complete destruction of all the restraints and all the shame of man, are the two distinguishing marks of this grand and perverse culture. To make man a strong being, endowed with genius, audacity, presence of mind, astute policy; dissimulation, patience, and to turn all this power to the acquisition of every kind of pleasure, pleasures of the body, of luxury, arts, literature, authority; that is, to form and to set free an admirable and formidable animal, very lustful and well armed—such was his object; and the effect, after a hundred years, is visible. They tore one another to pieces like beautiful lions and superb panthers. In this society, which was turned into an arena, amid so

many hatreds, and when exhaustion was setting in, the foreigner appeared: all bent beneath his lash; they were caged, and thus they pine away, in dull pleasures, with low vices, bowing their backs.[4] Despotism, the Inquisition, the Cicisbei, dense, ignorance, and open knavery, the shamelessness and the smartness of harlequins and rascals, misery and vermin—such is the issue of the Italian Renaissance. Like the old civilizations of Greece and Rome,[5] like the modern civilizations of Provence and Spain, like all southern civilizations, it bears in its bosom an irremediable vice, a bad and false conception of man. The Germans of the sixteenth century, like the Germans of the fourth century, have rightly judged it; with their simple common-sense, with their fundamental honesty, they have put their fingers on the secret plague-spot. A society cannot be founded only on the pursuit of pleasure and power; a society can only be founded on the respect for liberty and justice. In order that the great human renovation which in the sixteenth century raised the whole of Europe might be perfected and endure, it was necessary that, meeting with another race, it should develop another culture, and that from a more wholesome conception of existence it might educe a better form of civilization.

Section II.—Luther and the Reformation in Germany

Thus, side by side with the Renaissance, was born the Reformation. It also was in fact a new birth, one in harmony with the genius of the Germanic peoples. The distinction between this genius and others is its moral principles. Grosser and heavier, more given to gluttony and drunkenness,[1] these nations

[4] See, in Casanova's "Mémoires," the picture of this degradation. See also the "Mémoires" of Scipione Rossi, on the convents of Tuscany at the close of the eighteenth century.

[5] From Homer to Constantine, the ancient city was an association of freemen, whose aim was the conquest and destruction of other freemen.

[1] "Mémoires de la Margrave de Baireuth." See also Misson, "Voyage en Italie," 1700. Compare the manners of the students at the present day. "The Germans are, as you know, wonderful drinkers: no people in the world are more flattering, more civil, more officious; but yet they have terrible customs in the matter of drinking. With them everything is done drinking; they drink in doing everything. There was not time during a visit to say three words before you were astonished to see the collation arrive, or at least a few jugs of wine, accompanied by a plate of crusts of bread, dished up with pepper and salt, a fatal preparation for bad drinkers. Then you must become acquainted with the laws which are afterwards observed, sacred and inviolable laws. You must never drink without drinking to some one's health; also, after drinking, you must offer the wine to him whose health you have drunk. You must never refuse the glass which is offered to you, and you must naturally drain it to its last drop. Re-

are at the same time more under the influence of conscience, firmer in the observance of their word, more disposed to self-denial and sacrifice. Such their climate has made them; and such they have continued, from Tacitus to Luther, from Knox to Gustavus Adolphus and Kant. In the course of time, and beneath the incessant action of the ages, the phlegmatic body, fed on coarse food and strong drink, had become rusty, the nerves less excitable, the muscles less strung, the desires less seconded by action, the life more dull and slow, the soul more hardened and indifferent to the shocks of the body: mud, rain, snow, a profusion of unpleasing and gloomy sights, the want of lively and delicate excitements of the senses, keep man in a militant attitude. Heroes in the barbarous ages, workers to-day, they endure weariness now as they courted wounds then; now, as then, nobility of soul appeals to them; thrown back upon the enjoyments of the soul, they find in these a world, the world of moral beauty. For them the ideal is displaced; it is no longer amidst forms, made up of force and joy, but it is transferred to sentiments, made up of truth, uprightness, attachment to duty, observance of order. What matters it if the storm rages and if it snows, if the wind blusters in the black pine-forests or on the wan sea-surges where the sea-gulls scream, if a man, stiff and blue with cold, shutting himself up in his cottage, have but a dish of sourcrout or a piece of salt beef, under his smoky light and beside his fire of turf; another kingdom opens to reward him, the kingdom of inward contentment: his wife loves him and is faithful; his children round his hearth spell out the old family Bible; he is the master in his home, the protector, the benefactor, honored by others, honored by himself; and if so be that he needs assistance, he knows that at the first appeal he will see his neighbors stand faithfully and bravely by his side. The reader need only compare the portraits of the time, those of Italy and Germany; he will comprehend at a glance the two races and the two civilizations, the Renaissance and the Reformation: on one side a half-naked condottiere in Roman costume, a cardinal in his robes, amply draped, in a rich arm-chair, carved and adorned with heads of lions, foliage, dancing fauns, he himself full of irony, and voluptuous, with the shrewd and dangerous look of a poli-

flect a little, I beseech you, on these customs, and see how it is possible to cease drinking; accordingly, they never cease. In Germany it is a perpetual drinking-bout; to drink in Germany is to drink forever."

tician and man of the world, craftily poised and on his guard; on the other side, some honest doctor, a theologian, a simple man, with badly combed locks, stiff as a post, in his simple gown of coarse black serge, with big books of dogma ponderously clasped, a conscientious worker, an exemplary father of a family. See now the great artist of the age, a laborious and conscientious workman, a follower of Luther's, a true Northman—Albert Dürer.[2] He also, like Raphael and Titian, has his ideal of man, an inexhaustible ideal, whence spring by hundreds living figures and the representations of manners, but how national and original! He cares not for expansive and happy beauty: to him nude bodies are but bodies undressed: narrow shoulders, prominent stomachs, thin legs, feet weighed down by shoes, his neighbor the carpenter's, or his gossip the sausage-seller's. The heads stand out in his etchings, remorselessly scraped and scooped away, savage or commonplace, often wrinkled by the fatigues of trade, generally sad, anxious, and patient, harshly and wretchedly transformed by the necessities of realistic life. Where is the vista out of this minute copy of ugly truth? To what land will the lofty and melancholy imagination betake itself? The land of dreams, strange dreams swarming with deep thoughts, sad contemplation of human destiny, a vague notion of the great enigma, groping reflection, which in the dimness of the rough woodcuts, amidst obscure emblems and fantastic figures, tries to seize upon truth and justice. There was no need to search so far: Durer had grasped them at the first effort. If there is any decency in the world, it is in the Madonnas which are constantly springing to life under his pencil. He did not begin, like Raphael, by making them nude; the most licentious hand would not venture to disturb one stiff fold of their robes; with an infant in their arms, they think but of him, and will never think of anybody else but him; not only are they innocent, but they are virtuous. The good German housewife, forever shut up, voluntarily and naturally, within her domestic duties and contentment, breathes out in all the fundamental sincerity, the seriousness, the unassailable loyalty of their attitudes and looks. He has done more; with this peaceful virtue he has painted a militant virtue. There at last is the genuine Christ, the man crucified, lean and fleshless through his agony, whose blood

[2] See his letters, and the sympathy expressed for Luther.

trickles minute by minute, in rarer drops, as the feebler and feebler pulsations give warning of the last throe of a dying life. We do not find here, as in the Italian masters, a sight to charm the eyes, a mere flow of drapery, a disposition of groups. The heart, the very heart is wounded by this sight: it is the just man oppressed, who is dying because the world hates justice. The mighty, the men of the age, are there, indifferent, full of irony: a plumed knight, a big-bellied burgomaster, who, with hands folded behind his back, looks on, kills an hour. But the rest weep; above the fainting women, angels full of anguish catch in their vessels the holy blood as it trickles down, and the stars of heaven veil their face not to behold so tremendous an outrage. Other outrages will also be represented; tortures manifold, and the true martyrs beside the true Christ, resigned, silent, with the sweet expression of the earliest believers. They are bound to an old tree, and the executioner tears them with his iron-pointed lash. A bishop with clasped hands is praying, lying down, whilst an auger is being screwed into his eye. Above, amid the interlacing trees and gnarled roots, a band of men and women climb under the lash the breast of a hill, and they are hurled from the crest at the lance's point into the abyss; here and there roll heads, lifeless bodies; and by the side of those who are being decapitated, the swollen corpses, impaled, await the croaking ravens. All these sufferings must be undergone for the confession of faith and the establishment of justice. But above there is a guardian, an avenger, an all-powerful Judge, whose day shall come. This day has come, and the piercing rays of the last sun already flash, like a handful of darts, across the darkness of the age. High up in the heavens appears the angel in his shining robe, leading the ungovernable horsemen, the flashing swords, the inevitable arrows of the avengers, who are to trample upon and punish the earth; mankind falls down beneath their charge, and already the jaw of the infernal monster grinds the head of the wicked prelates. This is the popular poem of conscience, and from the days of the apostles man has not had a more sublime and complete conception.[3]

For conscience, like other things, has its poem; by a natural invasion the all-powerful idea of justice overflows from the soul,

[3] See a collection of Albert Durer's wood-carvings. Remark the resemblance of his "Apocalypse" to Luther's "Table Talk."

covers heaven, and enthrones there a new deity. A formidable deity, who is scarcely like the calm intelligence which serves philosophers to explain the order of things; nor to that tolerant deity, a kind of constitutional king, whom Voltaire discovered at the end of a chain of argument, whom Béranger sings of as of a comrade, and whom he salutes "*sans lui demander rien.*" It is the just Judge, sinless and stern, who demands of man a strict account of his visible actions and of all his invisible feelings, who tolerates no forgetfulness, no dejection, no failing, before whom every approach to weakness or error is an outrage and a treason. What is our justice before this strict justice? People lived in peace in the times of ignorance; at most, when they felt themselves guilty, they went for absolution to a priest; all was ended by their buying a big indulgence; there was a tariff, as there still is; Tetzel the Dominican declares that all sins are blotted out "as soon as the money chinks in the box." Whatever be the crime, there is a quittance; even "*si Dei matrem vi olavisset,*" he might go home clean and sure of heaven. Unfortunately the venders of pardons did not know that all was changed, and that the intellect was become manly, no longer gabbling words mechanically like a catechism, but probing them anxiously like a truth. In the universal Renaissance, and in the mighty growth of all human ideas, the German idea of duty blooms like the rest. Now, when we speak of justice, it is no longer a lifeless phrase which we repeat, but a living idea which we produce; man sees the object which it represents, and feels the emotion which summons it up; he no longer receives, but he creates it; it is his work and his tyrant; he makes it, and submits to it. "These words *justus* and *justitia Dei*," says Luther, "were a thunder to my conscience. I shuddered to hear them; I told myself, if God is just, He will punish me." [4] For as soon as the conscience discovers again the idea of the perfect model,[5] the smallest fail-

[4] Calvin, the logician of the Reformation, well explains the dependence of all the Protestant ideas in his "Institutes of the Christian Religion," 1. (1) The idea of the perfect God, the stern Judge. (2) The alarm of conscience. (3) The impotence and corruption of nature. (4) The advent of free grace. (5) The rejection of rites and ceremonies.

[5] "In the measure in which pride is rooted within us it always appears to us as though we were just and whole, good and holy; unless we are convinced by manifest arguments of our injustice, uncleanness, folly, and impurity. For we are not convinced of it if we turn our eyes to our own persons merely, and if we do not think also of God, who is the only rule by which we must shape and regulate this judgment. . . . And then that which had a fair appearance of virtue will be found to be nothing but weakness.

"This is the source of that horror and wonder by which the Scriptures tell us the saints were afflicted and cast down, when and as often as they felt the presence of God. For we see those

ings appeared to be crimes, and man, condemned by his own scruples, fell prostrate, and, "as it were, swallowed up" with horror. "I, who lived the life of a spotless monk," says Luther, "yet felt within me the troubled conscience of a sinner, without managing to assure myself as to the satisfaction which I owed to God. . . . Then I said to myself: Am I then the only one who ought to be sad in my spirit? . . . Oh, what horrible spectres and figures I used to see!" Thus alarmed, conscience believes that the terrible day is at hand. "The end of the world is near. . . . Our children will see it; perchance we ourselves." Once in this mood he had terrible dreams for six months at a time. Like the Christians of the Apocalypse, he fixes the moment when the world will be destroyed: it will come at Easter, or at the conversion of Saint Paul. One theologian, his friend, thought of giving all his goods to the poor; "but would they receive it?" he said. "To-morrow night we shall be seated in heaven." Under such anguish the body gives way. For fourteen days Luther was in such a condition that he could neither drink, eat, nor sleep. "Day and night," his eyes fixed on a text of Saint Paul, he saw the Judge, and His inevitable hand. Such is the tragedy which is enacted in all Protestant souls—the eternal tragedy of conscience; and its issue is a new religion.

For nature alone and unassisted cannot rise from this abyss. "By itself it is so corrupted, that it does not feel the desire for heavenly things. . . . There is in it before God nothing but lust." Good intentions cannot spring from it. "For, terrified by the vision of his sin, man could not resolve to do good, troubled and anxious as he is; on the contrary, dejected and crushed by the weight of his sin, he falls into despair and hatred of God, as it was with Cain, Saul, Judas;" so that, abandoned to himself, he can find nothing within him but the rage and the dejection of a despairing wretch or a devil. In vain he might try to redeem himself by good works: our good deeds are not pure; even though pure, they do not wipe out the stain of previous sins, and moreover they do not take away the original corruption of the heart; they are only boughs and blossoms,

who were as it might be far from God, and who were confident and went about with head erect, as soon as He displayed His glory to them, they were shaken and terrified, so much so that they were overwhelmed, nay swallowed up in the horror of death, and that they fainted away."—Calvin's "Institutes," I.

the inherited poison is in the sap. Man must descend to the heart, underneath literal obedience and legal rule; from the kingdom of law he must penetrate into that of grace; from forced righteousness to spontaneous generosity; beneath his original nature, which led him to selfishness and earthly things, a second nature must be developed, leading him to sacrifice and heavenly things. Neither my works, nor my justice, nor the works or justice of any creature or of all creatures, could work in me this wonderful change. One alone can do it, the pure God, the Just Victim, the Saviour, the Redeemer, Jesus, my Christ, by imputing to me His justice, by pouring upon me His merits, by drowning my sin under His sacrifice. The world is a "mass of perdition," [6] predestined to hell. Lord Jesus, draw me back, select me from this mass. I have no claim to it; there is nothing in me that is not abominable; this very prayer is inspired and formed within me by Thee. But I weep, and my breast heaves, and my heart is broken. Lord, let me feel myself redeemed, pardoned, Thy elect one, Thy faithful one; give me grace, and give me faith! "Then," says Luther, "I felt myself born anew, and it seemed that I was entering the open gates of heaven."

What remains to be done after this renovation of the heart? Nothing: all religion is in that: the rest must be reduced or suppressed; it is a personal affair, an inward dialogue between God and man, where there are only two things at work—the very word of God as it is transmitted by Scripture, and the emotions of the heart of man, as the word of God excites and maintains them.[7] Let us do away with the rites that appeal to the senses, wherewith men wished to replace this intercourse between the invisible soul and the visible judge—mortifications, fasts, corporeal penance, Lent, vows of chastity and poverty, rosaries, indulgences; rites serve only to smother living piety underneath mechanical works. Away with the mediators by which men attempted to impede the direct intercourse between God and man

[6] Saint Augustine.

[7] Melanchthon, preface to Luther's works: "It is clear that the works of Thomas, Scotus, and the like, are utterly silent about the element of justification by faith, and contain many errors concerning the most important questions relating to the church. It is clear that the discourses of the monks in their churches almost throughout the world were either fables about purgatory and the saints or else some kind of dogma of law or discipline, without a word of the gospel concerning Christ, or else were vain trifles about distinctions in the matter of food, about feasts, and other human traditions. . . . The gospel is pure, incorruptible, and not diluted with Gentile opinions." See also Fox, "Acts and Monuments," 8 vols. ed. Townsend, 1843, ii. 42.

—namely, saints, the Virgin, the Pope, the priests; whosoever adores or obeys them is an idolater. Neither saints nor Virgin can convert or save us; God alone by His Christ can convert and save. Neither Pope nor priest can fix our faith or forgive our sins; God alone instructs us by His word, and absolves us by His pardon. No more pilgrimages or relics; no more traditions or auricular confessions. A new church appears, and therewith a new worship; ministers of religion change their tone, the worship of God its form; the authority of the clergy is diminished, and the pomp of services is reduced: they are reduced and diminished the more, because the primitive idea of the new theology is more absorbing; so much so, that in certain sects they have disappeared altogether. The priest descends from the lofty position in which the right of forgiving sins and of regulating faith had raised him over the heads of the laity; he returns to civil society, marries like the rest, aims to be once more an equal, is merely a more learned and pious man than others, chosen by themselves and their adviser. The church becomes a temple, void of images, decorations, ceremonies, sometimes altogether bare; a simple meeting-house, where, between whitewashed walls, from a plain pulpit, a man in a black gown speaks without gesticulations, reads a passage from the Bible, begins a hymn, which the congregation takes up. There is another place of prayer, as little adorned and not less venerated, the domestic hearth, where every night the father of the family, before his servants and his children, prays aloud and reads the Scriptures. An austere and free religion, purged from sensualism and obedience, inward and personal, which, set on foot by the awakening of the conscience, could only be established among races in which each man found within his nature the conviction that he alone is responsible for his actions, and always bound to the observance of his duty.

Section III.—The Reformation in England

It must be admitted that the Reformation entered England by a side door; but it is enough that it came in, whatever the manner: for great revolutions are not introduced by court intrigues and official cleverness, but by social conditions and popular instincts. When five millions of men are converted, it is

because five millions of men wish to be converted. Let us therefore leave on one side the intrigues in high places, the scruples and passions of Henry VIII,[1] the pliability and plausibility of Cranmer, the vacillations and basenesses of Parliament, the oscillation and tardiness of the Reformation, begun, then arrested, then pushed forward, then suddenly, violently pushed back, then spread over the whole nation, and hedged in by a legal establishment, built up from discordant materials, but yet solid and durable. Every great change has its root in the soul, and we have only to look close into this deep soil to discover the national inclinations and the secular irritations from which Protestantism has issued.

A hundred and fifty years before, it had been on the point of bursting forth; Wyclif had appeared, the Lollards had sprung up, the Bible had been translated; the Commons had proposed the confiscation of all ecclesiastical property; then under the pressure of the Church, royalty and aristocracy combined, the growing Reformation being crushed, disappeared underground, only to reappear at distant intervals by the sufferings of its martyrs. The bishops had received the right of imprisoning without trial laymen suspected of heresy; they had burned Lord Cobham alive; the kings chose their ministers from the episcopal bench; settled in authority and pomp, they had made the nobility and people bend under the secular sword which had been intrusted to them, and in their hands the stern network of law, which from the Conquest had compressed the nation in its iron meshes, had become still more stringent and more offensive. Venial acts had been construed into crimes, and the judicial repression, extended to sins as well as to crimes, had changed the police into an inquisition. "'Offences against 'chastity, 'heresy,' or 'matter sounding thereunto,' 'witchcraft,' 'drunkenness,' 'scandal,' 'defamation,' 'impatient words,' 'broken promises,' 'untruth,' 'absence from church,' 'speaking evil of saints,' 'non-payment of offerings,' 'complaints against the constitutions of the courts themselves'; "[2] all these transgressions, imputed or suspected, brought folk before the ecclesiastical tribunals, at enormous expense, with long delays, from

[1] See Froude, "History of England," i. vi. The conduct of Henry VIII is there presented in a new light.

[2] Froude, i. 191. "Petition of Commons." This public and authentic protest shows up all the details of clerical organization and oppression.

great distances, under a captious procedure, resulting in heavy fines, strict imprisonments, humiliating abjurations, public penances, and the menace, often fulfilled, of torture and the stake. Judge from a single fact: the Earl of Surrey, a relative of the king, was accused before one of these tribunals of having neglected a fast. Imagine, if you can, the minute and incessant oppressiveness of such a code; how far the whole of human life, visible actions and invisible thoughts, was surrounded and held down by it; how by enforced accusations it penetrated to every hearth and into every conscience; with what shamelessness it was transformed into a vehicle for extortions; what secret anger it excited in these townsfolk, these peasants, obliged sometimes to travel sixty miles and back to leave in one or other of the numberless talons of the law [3] a part of their savings, sometimes their whole substance and that of their children. A man begins to think when he is thus down-trodden; he asks himself quietly if it is really by divine dispensation that mitred thieves thus practise tyranny and pillage; he looks more closely into their lives; he wants to know if they themselves practise the regularity which they impose on others; and on a sudden he learns strange things. Cardinal Wolsey writes to the Pope, that "both the secular and regular priests were in the habit of committing atrocious crimes, for which, if not in orders, they would have been promptly executed;[4] and the laity were scandalized to see such persons not only not degraded, but escaping with complete impunity." A priest convicted of incest with the prioress of Kilbourn was simply condemned to carry a cross in a procession, and to pay three shillings and fourpence; at which rate, I fancy, he would renew the practice. In the preceding reign (Henry VII) the gentlemen and farmers of Carnarvonshire had laid a complaint accusing the clergy of systematically seducing their wives and daughters. There were brothels in London for the especial use of priests. As to the abuse of the confessional, read in the original the familiarities to which it opened the door.[5] The bishops gave livings to their children whilst they were still young. The holy father prior of Maiden Bradley hath but six children, and but one daughter married yet of the goods of the monastery; trusting shortly to marry the rest. In the convents

[3] Froude, i. 26; ii. 192.
[4] In May, 1528. Froude, i. 194.
[5] Hale, "Criminal Causes." "Suppression of the Monasteries," Camden Society Publications. Froude, i. 194-201.

the monks used to drink after supper till ten or twelve next morning, and came to matins drunk. They played cards or dice. Some came to service in the afternoons, and only then for fear of corporal punishments. The royal "visitors" found concubines in the secret apartments of the abbots. At the nunnery of Sion, the confessors seduced the nuns and absolved them at the same time. There were convents, Burnet tells us, where all the recluses were found pregnant. About "two-thirds" of the English monks lived in such sort, that "when their enormities were first read in the Parliament House, there was nothing but 'down with them'!"[6] What a spectacle for a nation in whom reason and conscience were awakening! Long before the great outburst, public wrath muttered ominously, and was accumulating for a revolt; priests were yelled at in the streets or "thrown into the kennel"; women would not "receive the sacrament from hands which they thought polluted."[7] When the apparitor of the ecclesiastical courts came to serve a process, he was driven away with insults. "Go thy way, thou stynkyng knave, ye are but knaves and brybours everych one of you." A mercer broke an apparitor's head with his yard. "A waiter at the sign of the Cock" said "that the sight of a priest did make him sick, and that he would go sixty miles to indict a priest." Bishop Fitz-James wrote to Wolsey, that the juries in London were "so maliciously set *in favorem hæreticæ pravitatis*, that they will cast and condemn any clerk, though he were as innocent as Abel."[8] Wolsey himself spoke to the Pope of the "dangerous spirit" which was spread abroad among the people, and planned a reformation. When Henry VIII laid the axe to the tree, and slowly, with mistrust, struck a blow, then a second lopping off the branches, there were a thousand, nay, a hundred thousand hearts which approved of it, and would themselves have struck the trunk.

Consider the internal state of a diocese, that of Lincoln for instance,[9] at this period, about 1521, and judge by this example of the manner in which the ecclesiastical machinery works throughout the whole of England, multiplying martyrs, hatreds, and conversions. Bishop Longland summons the relatives of

[6] Latimer's Sermons.

[7] They called them "horsyn prestes," "horson," or "whorson knaves." Hale, p. 99, quoted by Froude, i. 199.

[8] Froude, i. 101 (1514).

[9] Fox, "Acts and Monuments," iv. 221.

the accused, brothers, women and children, and administers the oath; as they have already been prosecuted and have abjured, they must make oath, or they are relapsed, and the fagots await them. Then they denounce their kinsman and themselves. One has taught the other in English the Epistle of Saint James. This man, having forgotten several words of the Pater and Credo in Latin, can only repeat them in English. A woman turned her face from the cross which was carried about on Easter morning. Several at church, especially at the moment of the elevation, would not say their prayers, and remained seated "dumb as beasts." Three men, including a carpenter, passed a night together reading a book of the Scriptures. A pregnant woman went to mass not fasting. A brazier denied the Real Presence. A brickmaker kept the Apocalypse in his possession. A thresher said, as he pointed to his work, that he was going to make God come out of his straw. Others spoke lightly of pilgrimage, or of the Pope, or of relics, or of confession. And then fifty of them were condemned the same year to abjure, to promise to denounce each other, and to do penance all their lives, on pain of being burnt, as relapsed heretics. They were shut up in different "monasteries"; there they were to be maintained by alms, and to work for their support; they were to appear with a fagot on their shoulders at market, and in the procession on Sunday. Then in a general procession, then at the punishment of a heretic; "they were to fast on bread and ale only every Friday during their life, and every even of Corpus Christy on bread and water, and carry a visible mark on their cheek." Beyond that, six were burnt alive, and the children of one, John Scrivener, were obliged themselves to set fire to their father's wood-pile. Do you think that a man, burnt or shut up, was altogether done with? He is silenced, I admit, or he is hidden; but long memories and bitter resentments endure under a forced silence. People saw[10] their companion, relation, brother, bound by an iron chain, with clasped hands, praying amid the smoke, whilst the flame blackened his skin and destroyed his flesh. Such sights are not forgotten; the last words uttered on the fagot, the last appeals to God and Christ, remain in their hearts all-powerful and ineffaceable. They carry them about

[10] See, passim, the prints of Fox. All the details which follow are from biographies. See those of Cromwell, by Carlyle, of Fox the Quaker, of Bunyan, and the trials reported at length by Fox.

with them, and silently ponder over them in the fields, at their labor, when they think themselves alone; and then, darkly, passionately, their brains work. For, beyond this universal sympathy which gathers mankind about the oppressed, there is the working of the religious sentiment. The crisis of conscience has begun which is natural to this race; they meditate on their salvation, they are alarmed at their condition: terrified at the judgments of God, they ask themselves whether, living under imposed obedience and ceremonies, they do not become culpable, and merit damnation. Can this terror be stifled by prisons and torture? Fear against fear, the only question is, which is the strongest! They will soon know it: for the peculiarity of these inward anxieties is that they grow beneath constraint and oppression; as a welling spring which we vainly try to stamp out under stones, they bubble and leap up and swell, until their surplus overflows, disjointing or bursting asunder the regular masonry under which men endeavored to bury them. In the solitude of the fields, or during the long winter nights, men dream; soon they fear, and become gloomy. On Sunday at church, obliged to cross themselves, to kneel before the cross, to receive the host, they shudder, and think it is a mortal sin. They cease to talk to their friends, remain for hours with bowed heads, sorrowful; at night their wives hear them sigh; unable to sleep they rise from their beds. Picture such a wan face, full of anguish, nourishing under its sternness and calmness a secret ardor: it is still to be found in England in the poor shabby dissenter, who, Bible in hand, stands up suddenly to preach at a street corner; in those long-faced men who, after the service, not having had enough of prayers, sing a hymn in the street. The sombre imagination has started like a woman in labor, and its conception swells day by day, tearing him who contains it. Through the long muddy winter the howling of the wind sighing among the ill-fitting rafters, the melancholy of the sky, continually flooded with rain or covered with clouds, add to the gloom of the lugubrious dream. Thenceforth man has made up his mind; he will be saved at all costs. At the peril of his life, he obtains one of the books which teach the way of salvation, Wyclif's "Wicket Gate," "The Obedience of a Christian," or sometimes Luther's "Revelation of Antichrist," but above all some portion of the word of God, which Tyndale had just translated. One man hid

his books in a hollow tree; another learned by heart an epistle or a gospel, so as to be able to ponder it to himself even in the presence of his accusers. When sure of his neighbor, he speaks with him in private; and peasant talking to peasant, laborer to laborer—you know what the effect will be. It was the yeomen's sons, as Latimer said, who more than all others maintained the faith of Christ in England;[11] and it was with the yeomen's sons that Cromwell afterwards reaped his Puritan victories. When such words are whispered through a nation, all official voices clamor in vain: the nation has found its poem, it stops its ears to the troublesome would-be distractors, and presently sings it out with a full voice and from a full heart.

But the contagion had even reached the men in office, and Henry VIII at last permitted the English Bible to be published.[12] England had her book. Everyone, says Strype, who could buy this book either read it assiduously, or had it read to him by others, and many well advanced in years learned to read with the same object. On Sunday the poor folk gathered at the bottom of the churches to hear it read. Maldon, a young man, afterwards related that he had clubbed his savings with an apprentice to buy a New Testament, and that for fear of his father they had hidden it in their straw mattress. In vain the king in his proclamation had ordered people not to rest too much upon their own sense, ideas, or opinions; not to reason publicly about it in the public taverns and alehouses, but to have recourse to learned and authorized men; the seed sprouted, and they chose rather to take God's word in the matter than men's. Maldon declared to his mother that he would not kneel to the crucifix any longer, and his father in a rage beat him severely, and was ready to hang him. The preface itself invited men to independent study, saying that "the Bishop of Rome has studied long to keep the Bible from the people, and specially from princes, lest they should find out his tricks and his falsehoods; . . . knowing well enough, that if the clear sun of God's word came over the heat of the day, it would drive away the foul mist of his devilish doctrines."[13] Even on the admission, then, of official voices, they had there the pure and the whole truth, not merely speculative

[11] Froude, ii. 33: "The bishops said in 1529, 'In the crime of heresy, thanked be God there hath no notable person fallen in our time.'"

[12] In 1536. Strype's "Memorials," appendix. Froude, iii. ch. 12.

[13] Coverdale. Froude, iii. 81.

but moral truth, without which we cannot live worthily or be saved. Tyndale, the translator, says:

"The right waye (yea and the onely waye) to understand the Scripture unto salvation, is that we ernestlye and above all thynge serche for the profession of our baptisme or covenauntes made betwene God and us. As for an example. Christe sayth, Mat. v., Happy are the mercyfull, for they shall obtayne mercye. Lo, here God hath made a covenaunt wyth us, to be mercyfull unto us, yf we wyll be mercyfull one to another."

What an expression! and with what ardor men pricked by the ceaseless reproaches of a scrupulous conscience, and the presentiment of the dark future, will devote on these pages the whole attention of eyes and heart!

I have before me one of these great old folios,[14] in black letter, in which the pages, worn by horny fingers, have been patched together, in which an old engraving figures forth to the poor folk the deeds and menaces of the God of Israel, in which the preface and table of contents point out to simple people the moral which is to be drawn from each tragic history, and the application which is to be made of each venerable precept. Hence have sprung much of the English language, and half of the English manners; to this day the country is biblical;[15] it was these big books which had transformed Shakespeare's England. To understand this great change, try to picture these yeomen, these shopkeepers, who in the evening placed this Bible on their table, and bareheaded, with veneration, heard or read one of its chapters. Think that they have no other books, that theirs was a virgin mind, that every impression would make a furrow, that the monotony of mechanical existence rendered them entirely open to new emotions, that they opened this book not for amusement, but to discover in it their doom of life and death; in brief, that the sombre and impassioned imagination of the race raised them to the level of the grandeurs and terrors which were to pass before their eyes. Tyndale, the translator, wrote with such sentiments, condemned, hunted, in concealment, his mind full of the idea of a speedy death, and of the great God for whom at last he mounted the funeral pyre; and the spectators who had seen

[14] 1549. Tyndale's translation.

[15] An expression of Stendhal's; it was his general impression.

the remorse of Macbeth,[16] and the murders of Shakespeare can listen to the despair of David, and the massacres accumulated in the books of Judges and Kings. The short Hebrew verse-style took hold upon them by its uncultivated austerity. They have no need, like the French, to have the ideas developed, explained in fine clear language, to be modified or connected.[17] The serious and pulsating tone shakes them at once; they understand it with the imagination and the heart; they are not, like Frenchmen, enslaved to logical regularity; and the old text, so free, so lofty and terrible, can retain in their language its wildness and its majesty. More than any people in Europe, by their inner concentration and rigidity, they realize the Semitic conception of the solitary and almighty God; a strange conception, which we, with all our critical methods, have hardly reconstructed within ourselves at the present day. For the Jew, for the powerful minds who wrote the Pentateuch,[18] for the prophets and authors of the Psalms, life, as we conceive it, was secluded from living things, plants, animals, firmament, sensible objects, to be carried and concentrated entirely in the one Being of whom they are the work and the puppets. Earth is the footstool of this great God, heaven is His garment. He is in the world, amongst His creatures, as an Oriental king in his tent, amidst his arms and his carpets. If you enter this tent, all vanishes before the absorbing idea of the master; you see but him; nothing has an individual and independent existence. these arms are but made for his hands, these carpets for his foot; you imagine them only as spread for him and trodden by him. The awe-inspiring face and the menacing voice of the irresistible lord appear behind his instruments. And in a similar manner, for the Jew, nature and men are nothing of themselves; they are for the service of God; they have no other reason for existence; no other use; they vanish before the vast and solitary Being who, extended and set high as a mountain before human thought, occupies and covers in Himself the whole horizon. Vainly we attempt, we seed of the Aryan race, to represent to ourselves this devouring God; we always leave some beauty, some interest, some part of free

[16] The time of which M. Taine speaks and the translation of Tyndale precede by at least fifty years the appearance of "Macbeth" (1606). Shakespeare's audience read the present authorized translation.—Tr.

[17] See Lemaistre de Sacy's French translation of the Bible, so slightly biblical.

[18] See Ewald, "Geschichte des Volks Israel," his apostrophe to the third writer of the Pentateuch, "Erhabener Geist," etc.

existence to nature; we but half attain to the Creator, with difficulty, after a chain of reasoning, like Voltaire and Kant; more readily we make Him into an architect; we naturally believe in natural laws; we know that the order of the world is fixed; we do not crush things and their relations under the burden of an arbitrary sovereignty; we do not grasp the sublime sentiment of Job, who sees the world trembling and swallowed up at the touch of the strong hand; we cannot endure the intense emotion or repeat the marvellous accent of the Psalms, in which, amid the silence of beings reduced to atoms, nothing remains but the heart of man speaking to the eternal Lord. These Englishmen, in the anguish of a troubled conscience, and the oblivion of sensible nature, renew it in part. If the strong and harsh cheer of the Arab, which breaks forth like the blast of a trumpet at the sight of the rising sun and of the bare solitudes,[19] if the mental trances, the short visions of a luminous and grand landscape, if the Semitic coloring are wanting, at least the seriousness and simplicity have remained; and the Hebraic God brought into the modern conscience is no less a sovereign in this narrow precinct than in the deserts and mountains from which He sprang. His image is reduced, but His authority is entire; if He is less poetical, He is more moral. Men read with awe and trembling the history of His works, the tables of His law, the archives of His vengeance, the proclamation of His promises and menaces; they are filled with them. Never has a people been seen so deeply imbued by a foreign book, has let it penetrate so far into its manners and writings, its imagination and language. Thenceforth they have found their King, and will follow Him; no word, lay or ecclesiastic, shall prevail over His word; they have submitted their conduct to Him, they will give body and life for Him; and if need be, a day will come when, out of fidelity to Him, they will overthrow the State.

It is not enough to hear this King, they must answer Him; and religion is not complete until the prayer of the people is added to the revelation of God. In 1548, at last, England received her prayer-book[20] from the hands of Cranmer, Peter Martyr, Bernard Ochin, Melanchthon; the chief and most

[19] See Psalm civ. in Luther's admirable translation and in the English translation.

[20] The first Primer of note was in 1545; Froude, v. 141. The Prayer-book underwent several changes in 1552, others under Elizabeth, and a few, lastly, at the Restoration.

ardent reformers of Europe were invited to compose a body of doctrines conformable to Scripture, and to express a body of sentiments conformable to the true Christian faith. This prayer-book is an admirable book, in which the full spirit of the Reformation breathes out, where, beside the moving tenderness of the gospel, and the manly accents of the Bible, throb the profound emotion, the grave eloquence, the noble-mindedness, the restrained enthusiasm of the heroic and poetic souls who had rediscovered Christianity, and had passed near the fire of martyrdom.

"Almighty and most merciful Father; We have erred, and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against Thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare Thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore Thou them that are penitent; According to Thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life."

"Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness."

The same idea of sin, repentance, and moral renovation continually recurs; the master-thought is always that of the heart humbled before invisible justice, and only imploring His grace in order to obtain His relief. Such a state of mind ennobles man, and introduces a sort of impassioned gravity in all the important actions of his life. Listen to the liturgy of the deathbed, of baptism, of marriage; the latter first:

"Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance, in the holy state of Matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor, and keep her in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?"

These are genuine, honest, and conscientious words. No mystic languor here or elsewhere. This religion is not made for women who dream, yearn, and sigh, but for men who examine

themselves, act and have confidence, confidence in someone more just than themselves. When a man is sick, and his flesh is weak, the priest comes to him, and says:

"Dearly beloved, know this, that Almighty God is the Lord of life and death, and of all things to them pertaining, as youth, strength, health, age, weakness, and sickness. Wherefore, whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly, that it is God's visitation. And for what cause soever this sickness is sent unto you; whether it be to try your patience for the example of others, . . . or else it be sent unto you to correct and amend in you whatsoever doth offend the eyes of your heavenly Father; know you certainly, that if you truly repent you of your sins, and bear your sickness patiently, trusting in God's mercy, . . . submitting yourself wholly unto His will, it shall turn to your profit, and help you forward in the right way that leadeth unto everlasting life."

A great mysterious sentiment, a sort of sublime epic, void of images, shows darkly amid these probings of the conscience; I mean a glimpse of the divine government and of the invisible world, the only existences, the only realities, in spite of bodily appearances and of the brute chance, which seems to jumble all things together. Man sees this beyond at distant intervals, and raises himself out of his mire, as though he had suddenly breathed a pure and strengthening atmosphere. Such are the effects of public prayer restored to the people; for this had been taken from the Latin and rendered into the vulgar tongue: there is a revolution in this very word. Doubtless routine, here as with the ancient missal, will gradually do its sad work; by repeating the same words, man will often do nothing but repeat words; his lips will move whilst his heart remains inert. But in great anguish, in the confused agitation of a restless and hollow mind, at the funeral of his relatives, the strong words of the book will find in him a mood to feel; for they are living,[21] and do not stay in the ears like those of a dead language; they enter the soul, and as soon as the soul is stirred and worked upon, they take root there. If you go and hear these words in England itself, and if you listen to the deep and pulsating accent with

[21] "To make use of words in a foreign language, merely with a sentiment of devotion, the mind taking no fruit, could be neither pleasing to God, nor beneficial to man. The party that understood not the pith or effectualness of the talk that he made with God, might be as a harp or pipe, having a sound, but not understanding the noise that itself had made; a Christian man was more than an instrument; and he had therefore provided a determinate form of supplication in the English tongue, that his subjects might be able to pray like reasonable beings in their own language."—"Letter of Henry VIII to Cranmer." Froude, iv. 486.

which they are pronounced, you will see that they constitute there a national poem, always understood and always efficacious. On Sunday, when all business and pleasure is suspended, between the bare walls of the village church, where no image, no *ex-voto*, no accessory worship distracts the eyes, the seats are full; the powerful Hebraic verses knock like the strokes of a battering-ram at the door of every soul; then the liturgy unfolds its imposing supplications; and at intervals the song of the congregation, combined with the organ, sustains the people's devotion. There is nothing graver and more simple than this singing by the people; no scales, no elaborate melody; it is not calculated for the gratification of the ear, and yet it is free from the sickly sadness, from the gloomy monotony which the Middle Ages has left in the chanting in Roman Catholic churches; neither monkish nor pagan, it rolls like a manly yet sweet melody, neither contrasting with nor obscuring the words which accompany it; these words are Psalms translated into verse, yet lofty; diluted, but not embellished. Everything harmonizes—place, music, text, ceremony—to place every man, personally and without a mediator, in presence of a just God, and to form a moral poetry which shall sustain and develop the moral sense.[22]

[22] Bishop John Fisher's "Funeral Oration of the Countess of Richmond" (ed. 1711) shows to what practices this religion succeeded. The Countess was the mother of Henry VII, and translated the "Myrroure of Golde," and "The Forthe Boke of the Followinge Jesus Chryst":

"As for fastynge, for age, and feebleness, albeit she were not bound yet those days that by the Church were appointed, she kept them diligently and seriously, and in especial the holy Lent, throughout that she restrained her appetite till one meal of fish on the day; besides her other peculiar fasts of devotion, as St. Anthony, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Catherine, with other; and throughout all the year the Friday and Saturday she full truly observed. As to hard clothes wearing, she had her shirts and girdles of hair, which, when she was in health, every week she failed not certain days to wear, sometime the one, sometime the other, that full often her skin, as I heard say, was pierced therewith.

"In prayer, every day at her uprising, which commonly was not long after five of the clock, she began certain devotions, and so after them, with one of her gentlewomen, the matins of our Lady; which kept her to then, she came into her closet, where then with her chaplain she said also matins of the day; and after that, daily heard four or five masses upon her knees; so continuing in her prayers and devotions unto the hour of dinner which of the eating day was ten of the clocks, and upon the fasting day eleven. After dinner full truly she would go her stations to three altars daily; daily her dirges and commendations she would say, and her even songs before supper, both of the day and of our Lady, beside many other prayers and psalters of David throughout the year; and at night before she went to bed, she failed not to resort unto her chapel, and there a large quarter of an hour to occupy her devotions. No marvel, though all this long time her kneeling was to her painful, and so painful that many times it caused in her back pain and disease. And yet, nevertheless, daily, when she was in health, she failed not to say the crown of our lady, which, after the manner of Rome, containeth sixty and three aves, and at every ave, to make a kneeling. As for meditation, she had divers books in French, wherewith she would occupy herself when she was weary of prayer. Wherefore divers she did translate out of the French into English. Her marvellous

One detail is still needed to complete this manly religion—human reason. The minister ascends the pulpit and speaks: he speaks coldly, I admit, with literary comments and over-long demonstrations; but solidly, seriously, like a man who desires to convince, and that by honest means, who addresses only the reason, and discourses only of justice. With Latimer and his contemporaries, preaching, like religion, changes its object and character; like religion, it becomes popular and moral, and appropriate to those who hear it, to recall them to their duties. Few men have deserved better of their fellows, in life and word, than he. He was a genuine Englishman, conscientious, courageous, a man of common-sense and practical, sprung from the laboring and independent class, the very heart and sinews of the nation. His father, a brave yeoman, had a farm of about four pounds a year, on which he employed half a dozen men, with thirty cows which his wife milked, a good soldier of the king, keeping equipment for himself and his horse so as to join the army if need were, training his son to use the bow, making him buckle on his breastplate, and finding a few nobles at the bottom of his purse wherewith to send him to school, and thence to the university. Little Latimer studied eagerly, took his degrees, and continued long a good Catholic, or, as he says, "in darckense and in the shadow of death." At about thirty, having often heard Bilney the martyr, and having, moreover, studied the world and thought for himself, he, as he tells us, "began from that time forward to smell the word of God, and to forsooke the Schoole Doctours, and such fooleries"; presently to preach, and forthwith to pass for a seditious man, very troublesome to those men in authority who did not act with justice. For this was in the first place the salient feature of his eloquence: he spoke to people of their duties, in exact terms. One day, when he preached before the university, the Bishop of Ely came, curious to hear him. Immediately he changed his subject, and drew the portrait of a perfect prelate, a portrait which did not tally well with the bishop's character; and he was denounced for the act. When he was made chaplain of Henry VIII, awe-inspiring as the king was, little as he was himself, he dared to write to him

weeping they can bear witness of, which here before have heard her confession, which be divers and many, and at many seasons in the year, lightly every third day. Can also record the same those that were present at any time when she was houshylde, which was full nigh a dozen times every year, what floods of tears there issued forth of her eyes!"

freely to bid him stop the persecution which was set on foot, and to prevent the interdiction of the Bible; verily he risked his life. He had done it before, he did it again; like Tyndale, Knox, all the leaders of the Reformation, he lived in almost ceaseless expectation of death, and in contemplation of the stake. Sick, liable to racking headaches, stomach aches, pleurisy, stone, he wrought a vast work, travelling, writing, preaching, delivering at the age of sixty-seven two sermons every Sunday, and generally rising at two in the morning, winter and summer, to study. Nothing can be simpler or more effective than his eloquence; and the reason is, that he never speaks for the sake of speaking, but of doing work. His sermons, amongst others those which he preached before the young king Edward VI, are not, like those of Massillon before the youthful Louis XV, hung in the air, in the calm region of philosophical amplifications: Latimer wishes to correct, and he attacks actual vices, vices which he has seen, which everyone can point at with the finger; he too points them out, calls things by their name, and people too, giving facts and details, bravely; and sparing nobody, sets himself without hesitation to denounce and reform iniquity. Universal as his morality is, ancient as is his text, he applies it to his contemporaries, to his audience, at times to the judges who are there "in velvet cotes," who will not hear the poor, who give but a dog's hearing to such a woman in a twelvemonth, and who leave another poor woman in the Fleet, refusing to accept bail;[23] at times to the king's officer, whose thefts he enumerates, whom he sets between hell and restitution, and of whom he obtains, nay extorts, pound for pound, the stolen money.[24] From abstract iniquity he proceeds always to special abuse; for it is abuse which cries out and demands, not a discourser, but a champion. With him theology holds but a secondary place; before all, practice: the true offence against God in his eyes is a bad action, the true service, the suppression of bad deeds. And see by what paths he reaches this. No grand words, no show of style, no exhibition of dialectics. He relates his life, the lives of others, giving dates, numbers, places; he abounds in anecdotes, little obvious circumstances, fit to enter the imagination and arouse the recollections of each hearer. He is familiar, at

[23] Latimer's "Seven Sermons before Edward VI," ed. Edward Arber, 1869. Second sermon, pp. 73 and 74.

[24] Latimer's Sermons. Fifth sermon, ed. Arber, p. 147.

times humorous, and always so precise, so impressed with real events and particularities of English life, that we might glean from his sermons an almost complete description of the manners of his age and country. To reprove the great, who appropriate common lands by their enclosures, he details the needs of the peasant, without the least care for conventional proprieties; he is not working now for conventionalities, but to produce convictions:

"A plough land must have sheep; yea, they must have sheep to dung their ground for bearing of corn; for if they have no sheep to help to fat the ground, they shall have but bare corn and thin. They must have swine for their food, to make their veneries or bacon of: their bacon is their venison, for they shall now have *hangum tuum,* if they get any other venison; so that bacon is their necessary meat to feed on, which they may not lack. They must have other cattle: as horses to draw their plough, and for carriage of things to the markets; and kine for their milk and cheese, which they must live upon and pay their rents. These cattle must have pasture, which pasture if they lack, the rest must needs fail them: and pasture they cannot have, if the land be taken in, and enclosed from them." [25]

Another time, to put his hearers on their guard against hasty judgments, he relates that, having entered the gaol at Cambridge to exhort the prisoners, he found a woman accused of having killed her child, who would make no confession:

"Which denying gave us occasion to search for the matter, and so we did. And at length we found that her husband loved her not; and therefore he sought means to make her out of the way. The matter was thus: 'A child of hers had been sick by the space of a year, and so decayed as it were in a consumption. At the length it died in harvest-time. She went to her neighbors and other friends to desire their help, to prepare the child to the burial: but there was nobody at home; every man was in the field. The woman, in an heaviness and trouble of spirit, went, and being herself alone, prepared the child to the burial. Her husband coming home, not having great love towards her, accused her of the murder; and so she was taken and brought to Cambridge. But as far forth as I could learn through earnest inquisition, I thought in my conscience the woman was not guilty, all the circumstances well considered. Immediately after this I was called to preach before the king, which was my first sermon that I made before his majesty, and it was done at Windsor; when his majesty, after the sermon was done, did most familiarly talk with me in the gallery. Now, when I saw my time, I kneeled down before his majesty, opening the whole matter;

[25] Latimer's Sermons, ed. Corrie, 1844, 2 vols., "Last Sermon preached before Edward VI," i. 249.

and afterwards most humbly desired his majesty to pardon that woman. For I thought in my conscience she was not guilty; else I would not for all the world sue for a murderer. The king most graciously heard my humble request, insomuch that I had a pardon ready for her at my return homeward. In the mean season that same woman was delivered of a child in the tower at Cambridge, whose godfather I was, and Mistress Cheke was godmother. But all that time I hid my pardon, and told her nothing of it, only exhorting her to confess the truth. At the length the time came when she looked to suffer: I came, as I was wont to do, to instruct her; she made great moan to me, and most earnestly required me that I would find the means that she might be purified before her suffering; for she thought she should have been damned, if she should suffer without purification. . . . So we travailed with this woman till we brought her to a good trade; and at the length shewed her the king's pardon, and let her go.'

"This tale I told you by this occasion, that though some women be very unnatural, and forget their children, yet when we hear anybody so report, we should not be too hasty in believing the tale, but rather suspend our judgments till we know the truth." [26]

When a man preaches thus, he is believed; we are sure that he is not reciting a lesson; we feel that he has seen, that he draws his moral not from books, but from facts; that his counsels come from the solid basis whence everything ought to come —I mean from manifold and personal experience. Many a time have I listened to popular orators, who address the pocket, and prove their talent by the money they have collected; it is thus that they hold forth, with circumstantial, recent, proximate examples, with conversational turns of speech, setting aside great arguments and fine language. Imagine the ascendancy of the Scriptures enlarged upon in such words; to what strata of the people it could descend, what a hold it had upon sailors, workmen, servants! Consider, again, how the authority of these words is doubled by the courage, independence, integrity, unassailable and recognized virtue of him who utters them. He spoke the truth to the king, unmasked robbers, incurred all kind of hate, resigned his see rather than sign anything against his conscience; and at eighty years, under Mary, refusing to recant, after two years of prison and waiting—and what waiting! he was led to the stake. His companion, Ridley, slept the night before as calmly, we are told, as ever he did in his life; and when ready to be chained to the post, said aloud, "O heavenly

[26] Latimer's Sermons, ed. Corrie, "First Sermon on the Lord's Prayer."

Father, I give Thee most hearty thanks, for that Thou hast called me to be a professor of Thee, even unto death." Latimer in his turn, when they brought the lighted fagots, cried, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man: we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." He then bathed his hands in the flames, and resigning his soul to God, he expired.

He had judged rightly: it is by this supreme trial that a creed proves its strength and gains its adherents; tortures are a sort of propaganda as well as a testimony, and make converts whilst they make martyrs. All the writings of the time, and all the commentaries which may be added to them, are weak compared the actions which, one after the other, shone forth at that time from learned and unlearned, down to the most simple and ignorant. In three years, under Mary, nearly three hundred persons, men, women, old and young, some all but children, allowed themselves to be burned alive rather than to abjure. The all-powerful idea of God, and of the faith due to Him, made them resist all the protests of nature, and all the trembling of the flesh. "No one will be crowned," said one of them, "but they who fight like men; and he who endures to the end shall be saved." Doctor Rogers was burned first, in presence of his wife and ten children, one at the breast. He had not been told beforehand, and was sleeping soundly. The wife of the keeper of Newgate woke him, and told him that he must burn that day. "Then," said he, "I need not truss my points." In the midst of the flames he did not seem to suffer. "His children stood by consoling him, in such a way that he looked as if they were conducting him to a merry marriage." [27] A young man of nineteen, William Hunter, apprenticed to a silk-weaver, was exhorted by his parents to persevere to the end:

"In the mean time William's father and mother came to him, and desired heartily of God that he might continue to the end in that good way which he had begun: and his mother said to him, that she was glad that ever she was so happy to bear such a child, which could find in his heart to lose his life for Christ's name's sake.

"Then William said to his mother, 'For my little pain which I shall

[27] Noailles, the French (and Catholic) Ambassador. Pict. Hist. ii. 523. John Fox, "History of the Acts and Monuments of the Church," ed. Townsend, 1843, 8 vols. vi. 612, says: "His wife and children, being eleven in number, and ten able to go, and one sucking on her breast, met him by the way, as he went towards Smithfield."—Tr.

suffer, which is but a short braid, Christ hath promised me, mother (said he), a crown of joy: may you not be glad of that, mother?' With that his mother kneeled down on her knees, saying, 'I pray God strengthen thee, my son, to the end; yea, I think thee as well-bestowed as any child that ever I bare.' . . .

"Then William Hunter plucked up his gown, and stepped over the parlor groundsel, and went forward cheerfully; the sheriff's servant taking him by one arm, and I his brother by another. And thus going in the way, he met with his father according to his dream, and he spake to his son weeping, and saying, 'God be with thee, son William;' and William said, 'God be with you, good father, and be of good comfort; for I hope we shall meet again, when we shall be merry.' His father said, 'I hope so, William;' and so departed. So William went to the place where the stake stood, even according to his dream, where all things were very unready. Then William took a wet broom-faggot, and kneeled down thereon, and read the fifty-first Psalm, till he came to these words, 'The sacrifice of God is a contrite spirit; a contrite and a broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' . . .

"Then said the sheriff, 'Here is a letter from the queen. If thou wilt recant thou shalt live; if not, thou shalt be burned.' 'No,' quoth William, 'I will not recant, God willing.' Then William rose and went to the stake, and stood upright to it. Then came one Richard Ponde, a bailiff, and made fast the chain about William.

"Then said master Brown, 'Here is not wood enough to burn a leg of him.' Then said William, 'Good people! pray for me; and make speed and despatch quickly: and pray for me while you see me alive, good people! and I will pray for you likewise.' 'Now?' quoth master Brown, 'pray for thee! I will pray no more for thee, than I will pray for a dog.' . . .

"Then was there a gentleman which said, 'I pray God have mercy upon his soul.' The people said 'Amen, Amen.'

"Immediately fire was made. When William cast his psalter right into his brother's hand, who said, 'William! think on the holy passion of Christ, and be not afraid of death.' And William answered, 'I am not afraid.' Then lift he up his hands to heaven, and said, 'Lord, Lord, Lord, receive my spirit;' and, casting down his head again into the smothering smoke, he yielded up his life for the truth, sealing it with his blood to the praise of God." [28]

When a passion is able thus to subdue the natural affections, it is able also to subdue bodily pain; all the ferocity of the time labored in vain against inward convictions. Thomas Tomkins, a weaver of Shoreditch, being asked by Bonner is he could stand the fire well, bade him try it. "Bonner took Tomkins by the fingers and held his hand directly over the flame," to terrify him. But "he never shrank, till the veins shrank and the sinews burst,

[28] Fox, "History of the Acts," etc., vi. 727.

and the water (blood) did spirt in Mr. Harpsfield's face." [29] "In the Isle of Guernsey, a woman with child being ordered to the fire, was delivered in the flames, and the infant being taken from her, was ordered by the magistrates to be thrown back into the fire." [30] Bishop Hooper was burned three times over in a small fire of green wood. There was too little wood, and the wind turned aside the smoke. He cried out, "For God's love, good people, let me have more fire." His legs and thighs were roasted; one of his hands fell off before he expired; he endured thus three-quarters of an hour; before him in a box was his pardon, on condition that he would retract. Against long sufferings in mephitic prisons, against everything which might unnerve or seduce, these men were invincible: five died of hunger at Canterbury; they were in irons night and day, with no covering but their clothes, on rotten straw; yet there was an understanding amongst them, that the "cross of persecution" was a blessing from God, "an inestimable jewel, a sovereign antidote, well-approved, to cure love of self and earthly affection." Before such examples the people were shaken. A woman wrote to Bishop Bonner that there was not a child but called him Bonner the hangman, and knew on his fingers, as well as he knew his Pater, the exact number of those he had burned at the stake, or suffered to die of hunger in prison these nine months. "You have lost the hearts of twenty thousand persons who were inveterate Papists a year ago." The spectators encouraged the martyrs, and cried out to them that their cause was just. The Catholic envoy Renard wrote to Charles V that it was said that several had desired to take their place at the stake, by the side of those who were being burned. In vain the queen had forbidden, on pain of death, all marks of approbation. "We know that they are men of God," cried one of the spectators; "that is why we cannot help saying, God strengthen them." And all the people answered, "Amen, Amen." What wonder if, at the coming of Elizabeth, England cast in her lot with Protestantism? The threats of the Armada urged her on still further; and the Reformation became national under the pressure of foreign hostility, at it had become popular through the triumph of its martyrs.

[29] Fox, "History of the Acts," etc., vi. 719.

[30] Neal, "History of the Puritans," ed. Toulmin, 5 vols. 1793, i. 96.

Section IV.—The Anglicans

Two distinct branches receive the common sap—one above, the other beneath: one respected, flourishing, shooting forth in the open air; the other despised, half buried in the ground, trodden under foot by those who would crush it: both living, the Anglican as well as the Puritan, the one in spite of the effort made to destroy it, the other in spite of the care taken to develop it.

The court has its religion, like the country—a sincere and winning religion. Amid the pagan poetry which up to the Revolution always had the ear of the world, we find gradually piercing through and rising higher a grave and grand idea which sent its roots to the depth of the public mind. Many poets, Drayton, Davies, Cowley, Giles Fletcher, Quarles, Crashaw, wrote sacred histories, pious or moral verses, noble stanzas on death and the immortality of the soul, on the frailty of things human, and on the supreme providence in which alone man finds the support of his weakness and the consolation of his sufferings. In the greatest prose writers, Bacon, Burton, Sir Thomas Browne, Raleigh, we see spring up the fruits of veneration, thoughts about the obscure beyond; in short, faith and prayer. Several prayers written by Bacon are amongst the finest known; and the courtier Raleigh, whilst writing of the fall of empires, and how the barbarous nations had destroyed this grand and magnificent Roman Empire, ended his book with the ideas and tone of a Bossuet.[1] Picture Saint Paul's in London, and the fashionable people who used to meet there; the gentlemen who noisily made the rowels of their spurs resound on entering, looked around and carried on conversation during service, who swore by God's eyes, God's eyelids, who amongst the vaults and chapels showed off their beribboned shoes, their chains, scarfs, satin doublets, velvet cloaks, their braggadocio manners and stage attitudes. All this was very free, very loose, very far from our modern decency. But pass over youthful bluster; take man in his great moments,

[1] "O eloquent, just and mightie Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawne together all the farre stretched greatnesse, all the pride, crueltie, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, Hic jacet."

in prison, in danger, or indeed when old age arrives, when he has come to judge of life; take him, above all, in the country, on his estate, far from any town, in the church of the village where he is lord; or again, when he is alone in the evening, at his table, listening to the prayer offered up by his chaplain, having no books but some big folio of dramas, well dog's-eared; and his prayer-book and Bible: you may then understand how the new religion tightens its hold on these imaginative and serious minds. It does not shock them by a narrow rigor; it does not fetter the flight of their mind; it does not attempt to extinguish the buoyant flame of their mind; it does not proscribe the beautiful: it preserves more than any reformed church the noble pomp of the ancient worship, and rolls under the domes of its cathedrals the rich modulations, the majestic harmonies of its grave, organ-led music. It is its characteristic not to be in opposition to the world, but, on the contrary, to draw it nearer to itself, by bringing itself nearer to it. By its secular condition as well as by its external worship, it is embraced by and it embraces it: its head is the Queen, it is a part of the Constitution, its sends its dignitaries to the House of Lords: it suffers its priests to marry; its benefices are in the nomination of the great families; its chief members are the younger sons of these same families: by all these channels it imbibes the spirit of the age. In its hands, therefore, reformation cannot become hostile to science, to poetry, to the liberal ideas of the Renaissance. Nay, in the nobles of Elizabeth and James I, as in the cavaliers of Charles I, it tolerates artistic tastes, philosophical curiosity, the ways of the world, and the sentiment of the beautiful. The alliance is so strong, that, under Cromwell, the ecclesiastics in a mass were dismissed for their king's sake, and the cavaliers died wholesale for the Church. The two societies mutually touch and are confounded together. If several poets are pious, several ecclesiastics are poetical—Bishop Hall, Bishop Corbet, Wither a rector, and the preacher Donne. If several laymen rise to religious contemplations, several theologians, Hooker, John Hales, Taylor, Chillingworth, set philosophy and reason by the side of dogma. Accordingly we find a new literature arising lofty and original, eloquent and moderate, armed at the same time against the Puritans, who sacrifice freedom of intellect to the tyranny of the text, and

against the Catholics, who sacrifice independence of criticism to the tyranny of tradition; opposed equally to the servility of literal interpretation, and the servility of a prescribed interpretation. Opposed to the first appears the learned and excellent Hooker, one of the gentlest and most conciliatory of men, the most solid and persuasive of logicians, a comprehensive mind, who in every question ascends to the principles,[2] introduces into controversy general conceptions, and the knowledge of human nature;[3] beyond this, a methodical writer, correct and always ample, worthy of being regarded not only as one of the fathers of the English Church, but as one of the founders of English prose. With a sustained gravity and simplicity, he shows the Puritans that the laws of nature, reason, and society, like the law of Scripture, are of divine institution, that all are equally worthy of respect and obedience, that we must not sacrifice the inner word, by which God reaches our intellect, to the outer word, by which God reaches our senses; that thus the civil constitution of the church, and the visible ordinance of ceremonies, may be conformable to the will of God, even when they are not justified by a clear text of Scripture; and that the authority of the magistrates, as well as the reason of man, does not exceed its rights in establishing certain uniformities and disciplines on which Scripture is silent, in order that reason may decide:

[2] Hooker's Works, ed. Keble, 1836, 3 vols., "The Ecclesiastical Polity."

[3] Ibid. i. book i. 249, 258, 312:

"That which doth assign unto each thing the kind, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the form and measure of working, the same we term a Law. . . .

"Now if nature should intermit her course, and leave altogether, though it were but for a while, the observation of her own laws; if those principal and mother elements of the world, whereof all things in this lower world are made, should lose the qualities which now they have; if the frame of that heavenly arch erected over our heads should loosen and dissolve itself; if celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions, . . . if the prince of the lights of heaven, which now as a giant doth run his unwearied course, should as it were through a languishing faintness, begin to stand and to rest himself: . . . what would become of man himself, whom these things now do all serve? See we not plainly that obedience of creatures unto the law of nature is the stay of the whole world? . . .

"Between men and beasts there is no possibility of sociable communion because the well-spring of that communion is a natural delight which man hath to transfuse from himself into others, and to receive from others into himself, especially those things wherein the excellency of his kind doth most consist. The chiefest instrument of human communion therefore is speech, because thereby we impart mutually one to another the conceits of our reasonable understanding. And for that cause, seeing beasts are not hereof capable, forasmuch as with them we can use no such conference, they being in degree, although above other creatures on earth to whom nature hath denied sense, yet lower than to be sociable companions of man to whom nature hath given reason; it is of Adam said, that amongst the beasts 'he found not for himself any meet companion.' Civil society doth more content the nature of man than any private kind of solitary living, because in society this good of mutual participation is so much larger than otherwise. Herewith notwithstanding we are not satisfied, but we covet (if it might be) to have a kind of society and fellowship even with all mankind."

"For if the natural strength of man's wit may by experience and study attain unto such ripeness in the knowledge of things human, that men in this respect may presume to build somewhat upon their judgment; what reason have we to think but that even in matters divine, the like wits furnished with necessary helps, exercised in Scripture with like diligence, and assisted with the grace of Almighty God, may grow unto so much perfection of knowledge, that men shall have just cause, when anything pertinent unto faith and religion is doubted of, the more willingly to incline their minds towards that which the sentence of so grave, wise, and learned in that faculty shall judge most sound." [4]

This "natural light" therefore must not be despised, but rather used so as to augment the other, as we put torch to torch; above all, employed that we may live in harmony with each other.[5]

"Far more comfort it were for us (so small is the joy we take in these strifes) to labor under the same yoke, as men that look for the same eternal reward of their labors, to be conjoined with you in bands of indissoluble love and amity, to live as if our persons being many, our souls were but one, rather than in such dismembered sort to spend our few and wretched days in a tedious prosecuting of wearisome contentions."

In fact, the conclusions of the greatest theologians are for such harmony: abandoning an oppressive practice they grasp a liberal spirit. If by its political structure the English Church is persecuting, by its doctrinal structure it is tolerant; it needs the reason of the laity too much to refuse it liberty; it lives in a world too cultivated and thoughtful to proscribe thought and culture. John Hales, its most eminent doctor, declared several times that he would renounce the Church of England to-morrow if she insisted on the doctrine that other Christians would be damned; and that men believe other people to be damned only when they desire them to be so.[6] It was he again, a theologian, a prebendary, who advises men to trust to themselves alone in religious matters; to leave nothing to authority, or antiquity, or the majority; to use their own reason in believing, as they use "their own legs in walking"; to act and be men in mind as well as in the rest; and to regard as cowardly and impious the

[4] "Ecclesiastical Polity," i. book ii. ch. vii. 4, p. 405.

[5] See the "Dialogues of Galileo." The same idea which is persecuted by the church at Rome is at the same time defended by the church in England. See also "Ecclesiastical Polity," i. book iii. 461-481.

[6] Clarendon. See the same doctrines in Jeremy Taylor, "Liberty of Prophesying," 1647.

borrowing of doctrine and sloth of thought. So Chillingworth, a notably militant and loyal mind, the most exact, the most penetrating, and the most convincing of controversialists, first Protestant, then Catholic, then Protestant again and forever, has the courage to say that these great changes, wrought in himself and by himself, through study and research, are, of all his actions, those which satisfy him most. He maintains that reason alone applied to Scripture ought to persuade men; that authority has no claim in it; that nothing is more against religion than to force religion; that the great principle of the Reformation is liberty of conscience; and that if the doctrines of the different Protestant sects are not absolutely true, at least they are free from all impiety and from all error damnable in itself, or destructive of salvation. Thus is developed a new school of polemics, a theology, a solid and rational apologetics, rigorous in its arguments, capable of expansion, confirmed by science, and which authorizing independence of personal judgment at the same time with the intervention of the natural reason, leaves religion within reach of the world and the establishments of the past struggling with the future.

A writer of genius appears amongst these, a prose-poet, gifted with an imagination like Spenser and Shakespeare—Jeremy Taylor, who, from the bent of his mind as well as from circumstances, was destined to present the alliance of the Renaissance with the Reformation, and to carry into the pulpit the ornate style of the court. A preacher at St. Paul's, appreciated and admired by men of fashion for his youthful and fresh beauty and his graceful bearing, as also for his splendid diction; patronized and promoted by Archbishop Laud, he wrote for the king a defence of episcopacy; became chaplain to the king's army; was taken, ruined, twice imprisoned by the Parliamentarians; married a natural daughter of Charles I; then, after the Restoration, was loaded with honors; became a bishop, member of the Privy Council, and vice-chancellor of the university of Dublin. In every passage of his life, fortunate or otherwise, private or public, we see that he is an Anglican, a royalist, imbued with the spirit of the cavaliers and courtiers, not with their vices. On the contrary, there was never a better or more upright man, more zealous in his duties, more tolerant by principle; so that, preserving a Christian gravity and pur-

ity, he received from the Renaissance only its rich imagination, its classical erudition, and its liberal spirit. But he had these gifts entire, as they existed in the most brilliant and original of the men of the world, in Sir Philip Sidney, Lord Bacon, Sir Thomas Browne, with the graces, splendors, refinements which are characteristic of these sensitive and creative geniuses, and yet with the redundancies, singularities, incongruities inevitable in an age when excess of spirit prevented the soundness of taste. Like all these writers, like Montaigne, he was imbued with classic antiquity; in the pulpit he quotes Greek and Latin anecdotes, passages from Seneca, verses of Lucretius and Euripides, and this side by side with texts from the Bible, from the Gospels, and the Fathers. Cant was not yet in vogue; the two great sources of teaching, Christian and pagan, ran side by side; they were collected in the same vessel, without imagining that the wisdom of reason and nature could mar the wisdom of faith and revelation. Fancy these strange sermons in which the two eruditions, Hellenic and evangelic, flow together with their texts, and each text in its own language; in which, to prove that fathers are often unfortunate in their children, the author brings forward one after the other, Chabrias, Germanicus, Marcus Aurelius, Hortensius, Quintus Fabius Maximus, Scipio Africanus, Moses, and Samuel; where in the form of comparisons and illustrations it heaped up the spoil of histories, and authorities on botany, astronomy, zoology, which the cyclopædias and scientific fancies at that time poured into the brain. Taylor will relate to you the history of the bears of Pannonia, which, when wounded, will press the iron deeper home; or of the apples of Sodom, which are beautiful to the gaze, but full within of rottenness and worms; and many others of the same kind. For it was a characteristic of men of this age and school, not to possess a mind swept, levelled, regulated, laid out in straight paths, like the seventeenth-century writers in France, and like the gardens at Versailles, but full, and crowded with circumstantial facts, complete dramatic scenes, little colored pictures, pell-mell and badly dusted; so that, lost in confusion and dust, the modern spectator cries out at their pedantry and coarseness. Metaphors swarm one above the other, jumbled, blocking each other's path, as in Shakespeare. We think to follow one, and a second begins, then a third cutting into the

second, and so on, flower after flower, firework after firework, so that the brightness becomes misty with sparks, and the sight ends in a haze. On the other hand, and just by virtue of this same turn of mind, Taylor imagines objects, not vaguely and feebly, by some indistinct general conception, but precisely, entire, as they are, with their visible color, their proper form, the multitude of true and particular details which distinguish them in their species. He is not acquainted with them by hearsay; he has seen them. Better, he sees them now and makes them so be seen. Read the following extract, and say if it does not seem to have been copied from a hospital, or from a field of battle:

"And what can we complain of the weakness of our strengths, or the pressures of diseases, when we see a poor soldier stand in a breach almost starved with cold and hunger, and his cold apt to be relieved only by the heats of anger, a fever, or a fired musket, and his hunger slacked by a greater pain and a huge fear? This man shall stand in his arms and wounds, *patiens luminis atque solis*, pale and faint, weary and watchful; and at night shall have a bullet pulled out of his flesh, and shivers from his bones, and endure his mouth to be sewed up from a violent rent to its own dimensions; and all this for a man whom he never saw, or, if he did, was not noted by him; but one that shall condemn him to the gallows if he runs away from all this misery." [7]

This is the advantage of a full imagination over ordinary reason. It produces in a lump twenty or thirty ideas, and as many images, exhausting the subject which the other only outlines and sketches. There are a thousand circumstances and shades in every event, and they are all grasped in living words like these:

"For so have I seen the little purls of a spring sweat through the bottom of a bank, and interverate the stubborn pavement, till it hath made it fit for the impression of a child's foot; and it was despised, like the descending pearls of a misty morning, till it had opened its way and made a stream large enough to carry away the ruins of the undermined strand, and to invade the neighboring gardens; but then the despised drops were grown into an artificial river, and an intolerable mischief. So are the first entrances of sin, stopped with the antidotes of a hearty prayer, and checked into sobriety by the eye of a reverend man, or the counsels of a single sermon; but when such beginnings are neglected, and our religion hath not in it so much philosophy as to think anything evil as long as we can endure it, they grow up to ulcers

[7] Jeremy Taylor's Works, ed. Eden, 1840, 10 vols., "Holy Dying," ch. iii. sec. 4, § 3, p. 315.

and pestilential evils; they destroy the soul by their abode, who at their first entry might have been killed with the pressure of a little finger." [8]

All extremes meet in that imagination. The cavaliers who heard him, found, as in Ford, Beaumont and Fletcher, the crude copy of the most coarse and unclean truth, and the light music of the most graceful and airy fancies; the smell and horrors of a dissecting-room,[9] and all on a sudden the freshness and cheerfulness of smiling dawn; the hateful detail of leprosy, its white spots, its inner rottenness; and then this lovely picture of a lark, rising amid the early perfumes of the fields:

"For so have I seen a lark arising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest, than it could recover by the vibration and frequent weighing of his wings, till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel, as he passed sometimes through the air, about his ministries here below. So is the prayer of a good man." [10]

And he continues with the charm, sometimes with the very words, of Shakespeare. In the preacher, as well as in the poet, as well as in all the cavaliers and all the artists of the time, the imagination is so full, that it reaches the real, even to its filth, and the ideal as far as its heaven.

How could true religious sentiment thus accommodate itself to such a frank and worldly gait? This, however, is what is has done; and more—the latter has generated the former. With Taylor, as well as with the others, bold poetry leads to profound faith. If this alliance astonishes us to-day, it is because in this respect people have grown pedantic. We take a formal man for a religious man. We are content to see him stiff in his black coat, choked in a white neckerchief, with a prayer-book in his hand. We confound piety with decency, propriety, permanent and perfect regularity. We proscribe to a man of faith all candid speech, all bold gesture, all fire and dash in word or act; we are shocked by Luther's rude words, the bursts of laughter

[8] Sermon xvi., "Of Growth in Sin."

[9] "We have already opened up this dunghill covered with snow, which was indeed on the outside white as the spots of leprosy."

[10] "Golden Grove Sermons:" v. "The Return of Prayers."

which shook his mighty paunch, his rages like a working-man, his plain free speaking, the audacious familiarity with which he treats Christ and the Deity.[11] We do not perceive that these freedoms and this recklessness are precisely signs of entire belief, that warm and immoderate conviction is too sure of itself to be tied down to an irreproachable style, that impulsive religion consists not of punctilios but of emotions. It is a poem, the greatest of all, a poem believed in; this is why these men found it at the end of their poesy: the way of looking at the world, adopted by Shakespeare and all the tragic poets, led to it; another step, and Jacques, Hamlet, would be there. That vast obscurity, that black unexplored ocean, "the unknown country," which they saw on the verge of our sad life, who knows whether it is not bounded by another shore? The troubled notion of the shadowy beyond is national, and this is why the national renaissance at this time became Christian. When Taylor speaks of death he only takes up and works out a thought which Shakespeare had already sketched:

"All the succession of time, all the changes in nature, all the varieties of light and darkness, the thousand thousands of accidents in the world, and every contingency to every man, and to every creature, doth preach our funeral sermon, and calls us to look and see how the old sexton Time throws up the earth, and digs a grave where we must lay our sins or our sorrows, and sow our bodies, till they rise again in a fair or in an intolerable eternity."

For beside this final death, which swallows us whole, there are partial deaths which devour us piecemeal:

"Every revolution which the sun makes about the world, divides between life and death; and death possesses both those portions by the next morrow; and we are dead to all those months which we have already lived, and we shall never live them over again: and still God makes little periods of our age. First we change our world, when we come from the womb to feel the warmth of the sun. Then we sleep and enter into the image of death, in which state we are unconcerned in all the changes of the world: and if our mothers or our nurses die, or a wild boar destroy our vineyards, or our king be sick, we regard it not, but during that state are as disinterest as if our eyes were closed with the clay that weeps in the bowels of the earth. At the end of seven

[11] Luther's "Table Talk," ed. Hazlitt, No. 187, p. 30: "When Jesus Christ was born, he doubtless cried and wept like other children, and his mother tended him as other mothers tend their children. As he grew up he was submissive to his parents, and waited on them, and carried his supposed father's dinner to him; and when he came back, Mary no doubt often said, 'My dear little Jesus, where hast thou been?'"

years our teeth fall and die before us, representing a formal prologue to the tragedy; and still every seven years it is odds but we shall finish the last scene: and when nature, or chance, or vice, takes our body in pieces, weakening some parts and loosing others, we taste the grave and the solemnities of our own funerals, first in those parts that ministered to vice, and next in them that served for ornament, and in a short time even they that served for necessity become useless, and entangled like the wheels of a broken clock. Baldness is but a dressing to our funerals, the proper ornament of mourning, and of a person entered very far into the regions and possession of death: and we have many more of the same signification: gray hairs, rotten teeth, dim eyes, trembling joints, short breath, stiff limbs, wrinkled skin, short memory, decayed appetite. Every day's necessity calls for a reparation of that portion which death fed on all night, when we lay in his lap and slept in his outer chambers. The very spirits of a man prey upon the daily portion of bread and flesh, and every meal is a rescue from one death, and lays up for another: and while we think a thought, we die; and the clock strikes, and reckons on our portion of eternity: we form our words with the breath of our nostrils, we have the less to live upon for every word we speak." [12]

Beyond all these destructions other destructions are at work; chance mows us down as well as nature, and we are the prey of accident as well as of necessity:

"Thus nature calls us to meditate of death by those things which are the instruments of acting it: and God by all the variety of His providence makes us see death everywhere, in all variety of circumstances, and dressed up for all the fancies, and the expectation of every single person.[13] . . . And how many teeming mothers have rejoiced over their swelling wombs, and pleased themselves in becoming the channels of blessing to a family, and the midwife hath quickly bound their heads and feet and carried them forth to burial? [14] . . . You can go no whither but you tread upon a dead man's bones." [15]

Thus these powerful words roll on, sublime as an organ motet; this universal crushing out of human vanities has the funeral grandeur of a tragedy; piety in this instance proceeds from eloquence, and genius leads to faith. All the powers and all the tenderness of the soul are moved. It is not a cold rigorist who speaks; it is a man, a moved man, with senses and a heart, who has become a Christian not by mortification, but by the development of his whole being:

"Reckon but from the sprightfulness of youth, and the fair cheeks and full eyes of childhood, from the vigorousness and strong flexture of

[12] "Holy Dying," ed. Eden, ch. i. sec. i. p. 267.
[13] Ibid. 267. [14] Ibid. 268. [15] Ibid. 269.

the joints of five and twenty, to the hollowness and dead paleness, to the loathsomeness and horror of a three days' burial, and we shall perceive the distance to be very great and very strange. But so have I seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood, and at first it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven as a lamb's fleece; but when a ruder breath had forced open its virgin modesty, and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirements, it began to put on darkness, and to decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age; it bowed the head, and broke its stalk, and at night having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces. The same is the portion of every man and every woman, the heritage of worms and serpents, rottenness and cold dishonor, and our beauty so changed, that our acquaintance quickly knew us not; and that change mingled with so much horror, or else meets so with our fears and weak discoursings, that they who six hours ago tended upon us either with charitable or ambitious services, cannot without some regret stay in the room alone where the body lies stripped of its life and honor. I have read of a fair young German gentleman who living often refused to be pictured, but put off the importunity of his friends' desire by giving way that after a few days' burial they might send a painter to his vault, and if they saw cause for it draw the image of his death unto the life: they did so, and found his face half eaten, and his midriff and backbone full of serpents; and so he stands pictured among his armed ancestors. So does the fairest beauty change, and it will be as bad with you as me; and then what servants shall we have to wait upon us in the grave? what friends to visit us? what officious people to cleanse away the moist and unwholesome cloud reflected upon our faces from the sides of the weeping vaults, which are the longest weepers for our funeral?" [16]

Brought hither, like Hamlet to the burying-ground, amid the skulls which he recognizes, and under the oppression of the death which he touches, man needs but a slight effort to see a new world arise in his heart. He seeks the remedy of his sadness in the idea of eternal justice, and implores it with a breadth of words which makes the prayer a hymn in prose, as beautiful as a work of art:

"Eternal God, Almighty Father of men and angels, by whose care and providence I am preserved and blessed, comforted and assisted, I humbly beg of Thee to pardon the sins and follies of this day, the weakness of my services, and the strengths of my passions, the rashness of my words, and the vanity and evil of my actions. O just and dear God, how long shall I confess my sins, and pray against them, and yet fall under them? O let it be so no more; let me never return to the follies of which I am ashamed, which bring sorrow and death, and Thy dis-

[16] "Holy Dying," ch. i. sec. ii. p. 270.

pleasure, worse than death. Give me a command over my inclinations and a perfect hatred of sin, and a love to Thee above all the desires of this world. Be pleased to bless and preserve me this night from all sin and all violence of chance, and the malice of the spirits of darkness: watch over me in my sleep; and whether I sleep or wake, let me be Thy servant. Be Thou first and last in all my thoughts, and the guide and continual assistance of all my actions. Preserve my body, pardon the sin of my soul, and sanctify my spirit. Let me always live holily and soberly; and when I die receive my soul into Thy hands." [17]

Section V.—The Puritans

This was, however, but an imperfect Reformation, and the official religion was too closely bound up with the world to undertake to cleanse it thoroughly; if it repressed the excesses of vice, it did not attack its source; and the paganism of the Renaissance, following its bent, already under James I issued in the corruption, orgies, disgusting, and drunken habits, provoking and gross sensuality,[1] which subsequently under the Restoration stank like a sewer in the sun. But underneath the established Protestantism was propagated the forbidden Protestantism: the yeomen were settling their faith like the gentlemen, and already the Puritans made headway under the Anglicans.

No culture here, no philosophy, no sentiment of harmonious and pagan beauty. Conscience alone spoke, and its restlessness had become a terror. The sons of the shopkeeper, of the farmer, who read the Bible in the barn or the counting-house, amid the barrels or the wool-bags, did not take matters as a handsome cavalier bred up in the old mythology, and refined by an elegant Italian education. They took them tragically, sternly examined themselves, pricked their hearts with their scruples, filled their imaginations with the vengeance of God and the terrors of the Bible. A gloomy epic, terrible and grand as the Edda, was fermenting in their melancholy imaginations. They steeped themselves in texts of St. Paul, in the thundering menaces of the prophets; they burdened their minds with the pitiless doctrines of Calvin; they admitted that the majority of men were pre-

[17] "The Golden Grove."

[1] See in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Thierry and Theodoret" the characters of Bawder, Protalyce, and Brunhalt. In "The Custom of the Country," by the same authors, several scenes represent the inside of an infamous house—a frequent thing, by the way, in the dramas of that time; but here the boarders in the house are men. See also their "Rule a Wife and Have a Wife."

destined to eternal damnation:[2] many believed that this multitude were criminal before their birth; that God willed, foresaw, provided for their ruin; that He designed their punishment from all eternity; that He created them simply to give them up to it.[3] Nothing but grace can save the wretched creature, free grace, God's sheer favor, which He only grants to a few, and which He distributes not according to the struggles and works of men, but according to the arbitrary choice of His single and absolute will. We are "children of wrath," plague-stricken, and condemned from our birth; and wherever we look in all the expanse of heaven, we find but thunderbolts flashing to destroy us. Fancy, if you can, the effects of such an idea on solitary and morose minds, such as this race and climate generate. Several persons thought themselves damned, and went groaning about the streets; others hardly ever slept. They were beside themselves, always imagining that they felt the hand of God or the claw of the devil upon them. An extraordinary power, immense means of action, were suddenly opened up in the soul, and there was no barrier in the moral life, and no establishment in civil society which their efforts could not upset.

Forthwith private life was transformed. How could ordinary sentiments, natural and everyday notions of happiness and pleasure, subsist before such a conception? Suppose men condemned to death, not ordinary death, but the rack, torture, an infinitely horrible and infinitely extended torment, waiting for their sentence, and yet knowing that they had one chance in a thousand, in a hundred thousand, of pardon; could they still go on amusing themselves, taking an interest in the business or pleasure of the time? The azure heaven shines not for them, the sun warms them not, the beauty and sweetness of things have no attraction for them; they have lost the wont of laughter; they fasten inwardly, pale and silent, on their anguish and their expectation; they have but one thought: "Will the Judge pardon me?" They anxiously probe the involuntary motions of their heart, which alone can reply, and the inner revelation, which alone can render them certain of pardon or ruin. They think that any other condition of mind is unholy, that recklessness and joy are monstrous, that every worldly recreation or preoccupa-

[2] Calvin, quoted by Haag, ii. 216, "Histoire des Dogmes Chrétiens."

[3] These were the Supralapsarians.

tion is an act of paganism, and that the true mark of a Christian is trepidation at the very idea of salvation. Thenceforth rigor and rigidity mark their manners. The Puritan condemns the stage, the assemblies, the world's pomps and gatherings, the court's gallantry and elegance, the poetical and symbolical festivals of the country, the May-pole days, the merry feasts, bell-ringings, all the outlets by which sensuous or instinctive nature endeavored to relieve itself. He gives them up, abandons recreations and ornaments, crops his hair closely, wears a simple sombre-hued coat, speaks through his nose, walks stiffly, with his eyes turned upwards, absorbed, indifferent to visible things. The external and natural man is abolished; only the inner and spiritual man survives; there remains of the soul only the ideas of God and conscience—a conscience alarmed and diseased, but strict in every duty, attentive to the least requirements, disdaining the caution of worldly morality, inexhaustible in patience, courage, sacrifice, enthroning chastity on the domestic hearth, truth before the tribunals, honesty in the counting-house, labor in the workshop, everywhere a fixed determination to bear all and do all rather than fail in the least injunction of moral justice and Bible-law. The stoical energy, the fundamental honesty of the race, were aroused at the appeal of an enthusiastic imagination; and these unbending characteristics were displayed in their entirety in conjunction with abnegation and virtue.

Another step, and this great movement passed from within to without, from individual manners to public institutions. Observe these people in their reading of the Bible: they apply to themselves the commands imposed on the Jews, and the prologues urge them to it. At the beginning of their Bibles the translator [4] places a table of the principal words in the Scripture, each with its definition and text to support it. They read and weigh these words: "*Abomination* before God are Idoles, Images. Before whom the people do bow themselfes." Is this precept observed? No doubt the images are taken away, but the queen has still a crucifix in her chapel, and is it not a remnant of idolatry to kneel down when taking the sacrament? "*Abrogacion*, that is to abolyshe, or to make of none effecte:

[4] "The Bybble, now lately with greate industry and Diligēce recognised" (by Edm. Becke), London, by John Daye and William Seres, 1549, with Tyndale's "Prologues."

And so the lawe of the commandementes whiche was in the decrees and ceremonies, is abolished. The sacrifices, festes, meates, and al outwarde ceremonies are abrogated, and all the order of priesthode is abrogated." Is this so, and how does it happen that the bishops still take upon themselves the right of prescribing faith, worship, and of tyrannizing over Christian consciences? And have they not preserved in the organ-music, in the surplice of the priests, in the sign of the cross, in a hundred other practices, all these visible rites which God has declared profane? "*Abuses.* The abuses that be in the church ought to be corrected by the prynces. The ministers ought to preache against abuses. Any maner of mere tradicions of man are abuses." What, meanwhile, is their prince doing, and why does he leave abuses in the church? The Christian must rise and protest; we must purge the church from the pagan crust with which tradition has covered it.[5]

Such are the ideas conceived by these uncultivated minds. Fancy the simple folk, more capable by their simplicity of a sturdy faith, these freeholders, these big traders, who have sat on juries, voted at elections, deliberated, discussed in common private and public business, used to examine the law, the comparing of precedents, all the details of juridical and legal procedure; bringing their lawyer's and pleader's training to bear upon the interpretation of Scripture, who, having once formed a conviction, employ for it the cold passion, the intractable obstinacy, the heroic sternness of the English character. Their precise and combative minds take the business in hand. Everyone holds himself bound to be ready, strong, and well prepared to answer all such as shall demand a reason of his faith. Each one has his difficulty and conscientious scruple [6] about some portion of the liturgy or the official hierarchy; about the dignities of canons and archdeacons, or certain passages of the funeral service; about the sacramental bread or the reading of the apocryphal books in church; about plurality of benefices

[5] Examination of Mr. Axton: "I can't consent to wear the surplice, it is against my conscience; I trust, by the help of God, I shall never put on that sleeve, which is a mark of the beast." —Examination of Mr. White, "a substantial citizen of London" (1572), accused of not going to the parish church: "The whole Scriptures are for destroying idolatry, and everything that belongs to it."—"Where is the place where these are forbidden?"—"In Deuteronomy and other places; . . . and God by Isaiah commandeth not to pollute ourselves with the garments of the image."

[6] These expressions continually occur: "Tenderness of conscience" — "a squeamish stomach"—"our weaker brethren."

or the ecclesiastical square cap. They each oppose some point, all together the episcopacy and the retention of Romish ceremonies.[7] Then they are imprisoned, fined, put in the pillory; they have their ears cut off; their ministers are dismissed, hunted out, prosecuted.[8] The law declares that anyone above the age of sixteen who for the space of a month shall refuse to attend the established worship, shall be imprisoned until such time as he shall submit; and if he does not submit at the end of three months, he shall be banished the kingdom; and if he returns, put to death. They allow this to go on, and show as much firmness in suffering as scruple in belief; for a tittle about receiving of the communion, sitting rather than kneeling, or standing rather than sitting, they give up their livings, their property, their liberty, their country. One Dr. Leighton was imprisoned fifteen weeks in a dog's kennel, without fire, roof, bed, and in irons: his hair and skin fell off; he was set in the pillory during the November frosts, then whipped, and branded on the forehead; his ears were cut off, his nose slit; he was shut up eight years in the Fleet, and thence cast into the common prison. Many went cheerfully to the stake. Religion with them was a covenant, that is, a treaty made with God, which must be kept in spite of everything, as a written engagement, to the letter, to the last syllable. An admirable and deplorable stiffness of an over-scrupulous conscience, which made cavillers at the same time with believers, which was to make tyrants after it had made martyrs.

Between the two, it made fighting men. These men had become wonderfully wealthy and had increased in numbers in the course of eighty years, as is always the case with men who labor, live honestly, and pass their lives uprightly, sustained by a powerful source of action from within. Thenceforth they are able to resist, and they do resist when driven to extremities; they choose to have recourse to arms rather than be driven back to idolatry and sin. The Long Parliament assembles, defeats the king, purges religion; the dam is broken, the Independents are hurled above the Presbyterians, the fanatics above the mere zealots; irresistible and overwhelming faith, enthusiasm, grow into a torrent, swallow up, or at least disturb the strongest

[7] The separation of the Anglicans and dissenters may be dated from 1564.
[8] 1592.

minds, politicians, lawyers, captains. The Commons occupy a day in every week in deliberating on the progress of religion. As soon as they touch upon doctrines they became furious. A poor man, Paul Best, being accused of denying the Trinity, they demand the passing of a decree to punish him with death; James Nayler having imagined that he was God, the Commons devote themselves to a trial of eleven days, with a Hebraic animosity and ferocity: "I think him worse than possessed with the devil. Our God is here supplanted. My ears trembled, my heart shuddered, on hearing the report. I will speak no more. Let us all stop our ears and stone him." [9] Before the House of Commons, publicly, the men in authority had ecstasies. After the expulsion of the Presbyterians, the preacher Hugh Peters started up in the middle of a sermon, and cried out: "Now I have it by Revelation, now I shall tell you. This army must root up Monarchy, not only here, but in France and other kingdoms round about; this is to bring you out of Egypt: this Army is that corner-stone cut out of the Mountaine, which must dash the powers of the earth to pieces. But it is objected, the way we walk in is without president *(sic)*; what think you of the Virgin Mary? was there ever any president before, that a Woman should conceive a Child without the company of a Man? This is an Age to make examples and presidents in." [10] Cromwell found prophecies, counsels in the Bible for the present time, positive justifications of his policy. "He looked upon the Design of the Lord in this day to be the freeing of His People from every Burden, and that was now accomplishing what was prophesied in the 110th Psalm; from the Consideration of which he was often encouraged to attend the effecting those ends, spending at least an hour in the Exposition of that psalm." [11] Granted that he was a schemer, above all ambitious, yet he was truly fanatical and sincere. His doctor

[9] Burton's "Parliamentary Diary," ed. by Rutt, 1828, 4 vols. i. 54.

[10] Walker's "History of Independency," 1648, part ii. p. 49.

[11] This passage may serve as an example of the difficulties and perplexities to which a translator of a History of Literature must always be exposed, and this without any fault of the original author. Ab uno disce omnes. M. Taine says that Cromwell found justification for his policy in Psalm cxiii., which, on looking out, I found to be "an exhortation to praise God for His excellency and for His mercy"—a psalm by which Cromwell's conduct could nowise be justified. I opened then Carlyle's "Cromwell's Letters," etc., and saw, in vol. ii. part vi. p. 157, the same fact stated, but Psalm cx. mentioned and given—a far more likely psalm to have influenced Cromwell. Carlyle refers to "Ludlow," i. 319, Taine to Guizot, "Portraits Politiques," p. 63, and to Carlyle. In looking in Guizot's volume, 5th ed., 1862, I find that this writer also mentions Psalm cxiii.; but on referring finally to

related that he had been very melancholy for years at a time, with strange hallucinations, and the frequent fancy that he was at death's door. Two years before the Revolution he wrote to his cousin: "Truly no poor creature hath more cause to put himself forth in the cause of his God than I. . . . The Lord accept me in His Son, and give me to walk in the light—and give us to walk in the light, as He is the light! . . . blessed be His Name for shining upon so dark a heart as mine!"[12] Certainly he must have dreamed of becoming a saint as well as a king, and aspired to salvation as well as to a throne. At the moment when he was proceeding to Ireland, and was about to massacre the Catholics there, he wrote to his daughter-in-law a letter of advice which Baxter or Taylor might willingly have subscribed. In the midst of pressing affairs, in 1651, he thus exhorted his wife: "My dearest, I could not satisfy myself to omit this post, although I have not much to write. . . . It joys me to hear thy soul prospereth: the Lord increase His favors to thee more and more. The great good thy soul can wish is, That the Lord lift upon thee the light of His countenance, which is better than life. The Lord bless all thy good counsel and example to all those about thee, and hear all thy prayers, and accept thee always."[13] Dying, he asked whether grace once received could be lost, and was reassured to learn that it could not, being, as he said, certain that he had once been in a state of grace. He died with this prayer: "Lord, though I am a miserable and wretched creature, I am in Covenant with Thee through grace. And I may, I will, come to Thee, for Thy People. Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, a mean instrument to do them some good, and Thee service. . . . Lord, however Thou do dispose of me, continue and go on to do good for them . . . and go on . . . with the work of reformation; and make the Name of Christ glorious in the world."[14] Underneath this practical, prudent, worldly spirit, there was an English element of anxious and powerful imagination, capable of engendering an impassioned Calvinism and mystic fears.[15] The same contrasts were jumbled

the "Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow," printed at Vivay (sic) in the Canton of Bern, 1698, I read, in vol. i. p. 319, the sentence, as given above; therefore Carlyle was right.—Tr.

[12] "Cromwell's Letters and Speeches," ed. Carlyle, 1866, 3 vols. i. 79.

[13] Idem. ii. 273.

[14] Ibid. iii. 373.

[15] See his speeches. The style is disjointed, obscure, impassioned, out of the common, like that of a man who is not master of his wits, and who yet sees straight by a sort of intuition.

together and reconciled in the other Independents. In 1648, after unsuccessful tactics, they were in danger between the king and the Parliament; then they assembled for several days together at Windsor to confess themselves to God, and seek His assistance; and they discovered that all their evils came from the conferences they had had the weakness to propose to the king. "And in this path the Lord led us," said Adjutant Allen, "not only to see our sin, but also our duty; and this so unanimously set with weight upon each heart that none was able hardly to speak a word to each other for bitter weeping, partly in the sense and shame of our iniquities; of our unbelief, base fear of men, and carnal consultations (as the fruit thereof) with our own wisdoms, and not with the Word of the Lord." [16] Thereupon they resolved to bring the king to judgment and death, and did as they had resolved.

Around them, fanaticism and folly gained ground. Independents, Millenarians, Antinomians, Anabaptists, Libertines, Familists, Quakers, Enthusiasts, Seekers, Perfectionists, Socinians, Arians, anti-Trinitarians, anti-Scripturalists, Sceptics; the list of sects is interminable. Women, soldiers, suddenly got up into the pulpit and preached. The strangest ceremonies took place in public. In 1644, says Dr. Featly, the Anabaptists rebaptized a hundred men and women together at twilight, in streams, in branches of the Thames, and elsewhere, plunging them in the water over head and ears. One Oates, in the county of Essex, was brought before a jury for the murder of Anne Martin, who died a few days after her baptism of a cold which had seized her. George Fox the Quaker spoke with God, and witnessed with a loud voice, in the streets and market-places, against the sins of the age. William Simpson, one of his disciples, "was moved of the Lord to go, at several times, for three years, naked and barefooted before them, as a sign unto them, in the markets, courts, towns, cities, to priests' houses, and to great men's houses, telling them, so shall they all be stripped naked, as he was stripped naked. And sometimes he was moved to put on hair sackcloth and to besmear his face, and to tell them, so would the Lord besmear all their religion as he was besmeared.[17]

[16] "Cromwell's Letters," i. 265.

[17] "A Journal of the Life, etc., of that Ancient, Eminent, and Faithful Servant of Jesus Christ, George Fox," 6th edition, 1836.

"A female came into Whitehall Chapel stark naked, in the midst of public worship, the Lord Protector himself being present. A Quaker came to the door of the Parliament House with a drawn sword, and wounded several who were present, saying that he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to kill every man that sat in the house." The Fifth Monarchy men believed that Christ was about to descend to reign in person upon earth for a thousand years, with the saints for His ministers. The Ranters looked upon furious vociferations and contortions as the principal signs of faith. The Seekers thought that religious truth could only be seized in a sort of mystical fog, with doubt and fear. The Muggletonians decided that "John Reeve and Ludovick Muggleton were the two last prophets and messengers of God"; they declared the Quakers possessed of the devil, exorcised him, and prophesied that William Penn would be damned. I have before mentioned James Nayler, an old quartermaster of General Lambert, adored as a god by his followers. Several women led his horse, others cast before him their kerchiefs and scarfs, singing, Holy, holy, Lord God. They called him "lovely among ten thousand, the only Son of God, the prophet of the Most High, King of Israel, the eternal Son of Justice, the Prince of Peace, Jesus, him in whom the hope of Israel rests." One of them, Dorcas Erbury, declared that she had lain dead for two whole days in her prison in Exeter Gaol, and that Nayler had restored her to life by laying his hands upon her. Sarah Blackbury finding him a prisoner, took him by the hand and said, "Rise up, my love, my dove, my fairest one: why stayest thou among the pots?" Then she kissed his hand and fell down before him. When he was put in the pillory, some of his disciples began to sing, weep, smite their breasts; others kissed his hands, rested on his bosom, and kissed his wounds.[18] Bedlam broken loose could not have surpassed them.

Underneath the surface and these disorderly bubbles the wise and deep strata of the nation had settled, and the new faith was doing its work with them—a practical and positive, a political and moral work. Whilst the German Reformation, after the German wont, resulted in great volumes and a scholastic system, the English Reformation, after the English wont, resulted

[18] Burton's "Parliamentary Diary," i. 46-173. Neal, "History of the Puritans," iii.

in action and establishment. "How the Church of Christ shall be governed;" that was the great question which was discussed among the sects. The House of Commons asked the Assembly of Divines: If the classical, provincial, and local assemblies were *jure divino*, and instituted by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ? If they were all so? If only some were so, and which? If appeals carried by the elders of a congregation to provincial, departmental, and national assemblies were *jure divino*, and according to the will and appointment of Jesus Christ? If some only were *jure divino?* And which? If the power of the assemblies in such appeals was *jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ? and a hundred other questions of the same kind. Parliament declared that, according to Scripture, the dignities of priest and bishop were equal; it regulated ordinations, convocations, excommunications, jurisdictions, elections; spent half its time and exerted all its power in establishing the Presbyterian Church.[19] So, with the Independents, fervor engendered courage and discipline. "Cromwell's regiment of horse were most of them freeholders' sons, who engaged in the war upon principles of conscience; and that being well armed within, by the satisfaction of their consciences, and without with good iron arms, they would as one man stand firmly and charge desperately."[20] This army, in which inspired corporals preached to lukewarm colonels, acted with the solidity and precision of a Russian regiment: it was a duty, a duty towards God, to fire straight and march in good order; and a perfect Christian made a perfect soldier. There was no separation here between theory and practice, between private and public life, between the spiritual and the temporal. They wished to apply Scripture to "establish the kingdom of heaven upon earth," to institute not only a Christian Church, but a Christian society, to change the law into a guardian of morals, to compel men to piety and virtue; and for a while they succeeded in it. "Though the discipline of the church was at an end, there was nevertheless an uncommon spirit of devotion among people in the parliament quarters; the Lord's day was observed with remarkable strictness, the churches being crowded with numerous and attentive hearers three or four times in the day; the officers of the peace patrolled

[19] See Neal, "History of the Puritans," ii. 418-450.

[20] Whitelock's "Memorials," i. 68.

the streets, and shut up all publick houses; there was no travelling on the road, or walking in the fields, except in cases of absolute necessity. Religious exercises were set up in private families, as reading the Scriptures, family prayer, repeating sermons, and singing of psalms, which was so universal, that you might walk through the city of London on the evening of the Lord's day, without seeing an idle person, or hearing anything but the voice of prayer or praise from churches and private houses."[21] People would rise before daybreak, and walk a great distance to be able to hear the word of God. "There were no gaming houses, or houses of pleasure; no profane swearing, drunkenness, or any kind of debauchery."[22] The Parliamentary soldiers came in great numbers to listen to sermons, spoke of religion, prayed and sang psalms together, when on duty. In 1644 Parliament forbade the sale of commodities on Sunday, and ordained "that no person shall travel, or carry a burden, or do any worldly labour, upon penalty of 10s. for the traveller, and 5s. for every burden. That no person shall on the Lord's day use, or be present at, any wrestling, shooting, fowling, ringing of bells for pleasure, markets, wakes, church-ales, dancing, games or sports whatsoever, upon penalty of 5s. to everyone above fourteen years of age. And if children are found offending in the premises, their parents or guardians to forfeit 12d. for every offence. If the several fines above mentioned cannot be levied, the offending party shall be set in the stocks for the space of three hours." When the Independents were in power, severity became still greater. The officers in the army, having convicted one of their quartermasters of blasphemy, condemned him to have his tongue bored with a red-hot iron, his sword broken over his head, and himself to be dismissed from the army. During Cromwell's expedition in Ireland, we read that no blasphemy was heard in the camp; the soldiers spent their leisure hours in reading the Bible, singing psalms, and holding religious controversies. In 1650 the punishments inflicted on Sabbath-breakers were doubled. Stern laws were passed against betting, gallantry was reckoned a crime; the theatres were destroyed, the spectators fined, the actors whipped at the cart's tail; adultery punished with death: in

[21] Neal, ii. 553. Compare with the French Revolution. When the Bastille was demolished, they wrote on the ruins these words: "Ici l'on danse." From this contrast we see the difference between the two systems and the two nations.

[22] Neal, "History of the Puritans," ii. 555.

order to reach crime more surely, they persecuted pleasure. But if they were austere against others, they were so against themselves, and practised the virtues they exacted. After the Restoration, two thousand ministers, rather than conform to the new liturgy, resigned their cures, though they and their families had to die of hunger. Many of them, says Baxter, thinking that they were not justified in quitting their ministry after being set apart for it by ordination, preached to such as would hear them in the fields and in certain houses, until they were seized and thrown into prisons, where a great number of them perished. Cromwell's fifty thousand veterans, suddenly disbanded and without resources, did not bring a single recruit to the vagabonds and bandits. "The Royalists themselves confessed that, in every department of honest industry, the discarded warriors prospered beyond other men, that none was charged with any theft or robbery, that none was heard to ask an alms, and that, if a baker, a mason, or a waggoner, attracted notice by his diligence and sobriety, he was in all probability one of Oliver's old soldiers." [23] Purified by persecution and ennobled by patience, they ended by winning the tolerance of the law and the respect of the public, and raised national morality, as they had saved national liberty. But others, exiles in America, pushed to the extreme this great religious and stoical spirit, with its weaknesses and its power, with its vices and its virtues. Their determination, intensified by a fervent faith, employed in political and practical pursuits, invented the science of emigration, made exile tolerable, drove back the Indians, fertilized the desert, raised a rigid morality into a civil law, founded and armed a church, and on the Bible as a basis built up a new state.[24]

That was not a conception of life from which a genuine literature might be expected to issue. The idea of the beautiful is wanting, and what is a literature without that? The natural expression of the heart's emotions is proscribed, and what is a literature without that? They abolished as impious the free stage and the rich poesy which the Renaissance had brought them. They rejected as profane the ornate style and copious

[23] Macaulay, "History of England," ed. Lady Trevelyan, i. 121.

[24] A certain John Denis was publicly whipped for having sung a profane song. Mathias, a little girl, having given some roasted chestnuts to Jeremiah Boosy, and told him ironically that he might give them back to her in Paradise, was ordered to ask pardon three times in church, and to be three days on bread and water in prison. 1660-1670; records of Massachusetts.

eloquence which had been established around them by the imitation of antiquity and of Italy. They mistrusted reason, and were incapable of philosophy. They ignored the divine languor of the "Imitatio Christi" and the touching tenderness of the Gospel. Their character exhibits only manliness, their conduct austerity, their mind preciseness. We find amongst them only excited theologians, minute controversialists, energetic men of action, narrow and patient minds, engrossed in positive proofs and practical labors, void of general ideas and refined tastes, dulled by texts, dry and obstinate reasoners, who twisted the Scripture in order to extract from it a form of government or a table of dogma. What could be narrower or more repulsive than these pursuits and wrangles? A pamphlet of the time petitions for liberty of conscience, and draws its arguments (1) from the parable of the wheat and the tares which grow together till the harvest; (2) from this maxim of the Apostles, Let every man be thoroughly persuaded in his own mind; (3) from this text, Whatsoever is not of faith is sin; (4) from this divine rule of our Saviour, Do to others what you would they should do unto you. Later, when the angry Commons desired to pass judgment on James Nayler, the trial became entangled in an endless juridical and theological discussion, some declaring that the crime committed was idolatry, others seduction, all emptying out before the House their armory of commentaries and texts.[25] Seldom has a generation been found more mutilated in all the faculties which produce contemplation and ornament, more reduced to the faculties which nourish discussion and morality. Like a beautiful insect which has become transformed and has lost its wings, so we see the poetic generation of Elizabeth disappear, leaving in its place but a sluggish caterpillar, a stubborn and useful spinner, armed with industrious feet and formidable jaws, spending its existence in eating into old leaves and devouring its enemies. They are without style; they speak like business men; at most, here and there, a pamphlet of Prynne possesses a little vigor. Their histories, like May's for instance, are flat and heavy. Their memoirs, even those of Ludlow and Mrs. Hutchinson, are long, wearisome, mere statements, destitute of per-

[25] "Upon the common sense of Scripture," said Major-General Disbrowe, "there are few but do commit blasphemy, as our Saviour puts it in Mark: 'sins, blasphemies; if so, then none without blasphemy.' It was charged upon David and Eli's son, 'thou hast blasphemed, or caused others to blaspheme.'"—Burton's Diary, i. 54.

sonal feelings, void of enthusiasm or entertaining matter; "they seem to ignore themselves, and are engrossed by the general prospects of their cause." [26] Good works of piety, solid and convincing sermons; sincere, edifying, exact, methodical books, like those of Baxter, Barclay, Calamy, John Owen; personal narratives, like that of Baxter, like Fox's journal, Bunyan's life, a large collection of documents and arguments, conscientiously arranged—this is all they offer; the Puritan destroys the artist, stiffens the man, fetters the writer; and leaves of artist, man, writer, only a sort of abstract being, the slave of a watchword. If a Milton springs up amongst them, it is because by his great curiosity, his travels, his comprehensive education, above all by his youth saturated in the grand poetry of the preceding age, and by his independence of spirit, haughtily defended even against the sectarians, Milton passes beyond sectarianism. Strictly speaking, the Puritans could but have one poet, an involuntary poet, a madman, a martyr, a hero, and a victim of grace; a genuine preacher, who attains the beautiful by chance, whilst pursuing the useful on principle; a poor tinker, who, employing images so as to be understood by mechanics, sailors, servant-girls, attained, without pretending to it, eloquence and high art.

Section VI.—John Bunyan

Next to the Bible, the book most widely read in England is the "Pilgrim's Progress," by John Bunyan. The reason is, that the basis of Protestantism is the doctrine of salvation by grace, and that no writer has equalled Bunyan in making this doctrine understood.

To treat well of supernatural impressions, a man must have been subject to them. Bunyan had that kind of imagination which produces them. Powerful as that of an artist, but more vehement, this imagination worked in the man without his co-operation, and besieged him with visions which he had neither willed nor foreseen. From that moment there was in him as it were a second self, ruling the first, grand and terrible, whose apparitions were sudden, its motions unknown, which redoubled or crushed his faculties, prostrated or transported him, bathed

[26] Guizot, "Portraits Politiques," 5th ed. 1862.

him in the sweat of agony, ravished him with trances of joy, and which by its force, strangeness, independence, impressed upon him the presence and the action of a foreign and superior master. Bunyan, like Saint Theresa, was from infancy "greatly troubled with the thoughts of the fearful torments of hell-fire," sad in the midst of pleasures, believing himself damned, and so despairing, that he wished he was a devil, "supposing they were only tormentors: that if it must needs be that I went thither, I might be rather a tormentor, than be tormented myself." [1] There already was the assault of exact and bodily images. Under their influence reflection ceased, and the man was suddenly spurred into action. The first movement carried him with closed eyes, as down a steep slope, into mad resolutions. One day, "being in the field, with my companions, it chanced that an adder passed over the highway; so I, having a stick, struck her over the back; and having stunned her, I forced open her mouth with my stick, and plucked her sting out with my fingers, by which act, had not God been merciful to me, I might, by my desperateness, have brought myself to my end." [2] In his first approaches to conversion he was extreme in his emotions, and penetrated to the heart by the sight of physical objects, "adoring" priests, service, altar, vestment. "This conceit grew so strong upon my spirit, that had I but seen a priest (though never so sordid and debauched in his life), I should find my spirit fall under him, reverence him, and knit unto him; yea, I thought, for the love I did bear unto them (supposing they were the ministers of God), I could have laid down at their feet, and have been trampled upon by them; their name, their garb, and work did so intoxicate and bewitch me." [3] Already his ideas clung to him with that irresistible hold which constitutes monomania; no matter how absurd they were, they ruled him, not by their truth, but by their presence. The thought of an impossible danger terrified him just as much as the sight of an imminent peril. As a man hung over an abyss by a sound rope, he forgot that the rope was sound, and he became giddy. After the fashion of English villagers, he loved bell-ringing; when he became a Puritan, he considered the amusement profane, and gave it up; yet, impelled by his desire, he would go into the belfry and watch

[1] "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners."
[2] Ibid. sec. 12.
[3] Ibid. sec. 17.

the ringers. "But quickly after, I began to think, 'How if one of the bells should fall?' Then I chose to stand under a main beam, that lay overthwart the steeple, from side to side, thinking here I might stand sure; but then I thought again, should the bell fall with a swing, it might first hit the wall, and then rebounding upon me, might kill me for all this beam. This made me stand in the steeple-door; and now, thought I, I am safe enough, for if a bell should then fall, I can slip out behind these thick walls, and so be preserved notwithstanding. So after this I would yet go to see them ring, but would not go any farther than the steeple-door; but then it came into my head, 'How if the steeple itself should fall? And this thought (it may, for aught I know, when I stood and looked on) did continually so shake my mind, that I durst not stand at the steeple-door any longer, but was forced to flee, for fear the steeple should fall upon my head.'" [4] Frequently the mere conception of a sin became for him a temptation so involuntary and so strong, that he felt upon him the sharp claw of the devil. The fixed idea swelled in his head like a painful abscess, full of all sensitiveness and of all his life's blood. "Now no sin would serve but that; if it were to be committed by speaking of such a word, then I have been as if my mouth would have spoken that word whether I would or no; and in so strong a measure was the temptation upon me, that often I have been ready to clap my hands under my chin, to hold my mouth from opening; at other times, to leap with my head downward into some muckhill hole, to keep my mouth from speaking." [5] Later, in the middle of a sermon which he was preaching, he was assailed by blasphemous thoughts; the word came to his lips, and all his power of resistance was barely able to restrain the muscle excited by the tyrannous brain.

Once the minister of the parish was preaching against the sin of dancing, oaths, and games, when he was struck with the idea that the sermon was for him, and returned home full of trouble. But he ate; his stomach being charged, discharged his brain, and his remorse was dispersed. Like a true child, entirely absorbed by the emotion of the moment, he was transported, jumped out, and ran to the sports. He had thrown his ball, and was about to begin again, when a voice from heaven suddenly pierced his

[4] "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners," secs. 33, 34. [5] Ibid. sec. 103.

soul. "'Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?' At this I was put to an exceeding maze; wherefore, leaving my cat upon the ground, I looked up to heaven, and was as if I had with the eyes of my understanding, seen the Lord Jesus look down upon me, as being very hotly displeased with me, and as if He did severely threaten me with some grievous punishment for these and other ungodly practices."[6] Suddenly reflecting that his sins were very great, and that he would certainly be damned whatever he did, he resolved to enjoy himself in the mean time, and to sin as much as he could in this life. He took up his ball again, recommenced the game with ardor, and swore louder and oftener than ever. A month afterwards, being reproved by a woman, "I was silenced, and put to secret shame, and that too, as I thought, before the God of heaven: wherefore, while I stood there, hanging down my head, I wished that I might be a little child again, and that my father might learn me to speak without this wicked way of swearing; for, thought I, I am so accustomed to it, that it is in vain to think of a reformation, for that could never be. But how it came to pass I know not, I did from this time forward so leave my swearing, that it was a great wonder to myself to observe it; and whereas before I knew not how to speak unless I put an oath before, and another behind, to make my words have authority, now I could without it speak better, and with more pleasantness, than ever I could before."[7] These sudden alternations, these vehement resolutions, this unlooked-for renewal of heart, are the products of an involuntary and impassiond imagination, which by its hallucinations, its mastery, its fixed ideas, its mad ideas, prepares the way for a poet, and announces an inspired man.

In him circumstances develop character; his kind of life develops his kind of mind. He was born in the lowest and most despised rank, a tinker's son, himself a wandering tinker, with a wife as poor as himself, so that they had not a spoon or a dish between them. He had been taught in childhood to read and write, but he had since "almost wholly lost what he had learned." Education diverts and disciplines a man; fills him with varied and rational ideas; prevents him from sinking into monomania or being excited by transport; gives him determinate thoughts instead of eccentric fancies, pliable opinions for

[6] "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners," sec. 22.

[7] Ibid. secs. 27 and 28.

fixed convictions; replaces impetuous images by calm reasonings, sudden resolves by carefully weighed decisions; furnishes us with the wisdom and ideas of others; gives us conscience and self-command. Suppress this reason and this discipline, and consider the poor ignorant working-man at his toil; his head works while his hands work, not ably, with methods acquired from any logic he might have mustered, but with dark emotions, beneath a disorderly flow of confused images. Morning and evening, the hammer which he uses in his trade, drives in with its deafening sounds the same thought perpetually returning and self-communing. A troubled, obstinate vision floats before him in the brightness of the hammered and quivering metal. In the red furnace where the iron is glowing, in the clang of the hammered brass, in the black corners where the damp shadow creeps, he sees the flame and darkness of hell, and the rattling of eternal chains. Next day he sees the same image, the day after, the whole week, month, year. His brow wrinkles, his eyes grow sad, and his wife hears him groan in the night-time. She remembers that she has two volumes in an old bag. "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven" and "The Practice of Piety"; he spells them out to console himself; and the printed thoughts, already sublime in themselves, made more so by the slowness with which they are read, sink like an oracle into his subdued faith. The braziers of the devils—the golden harps of heaven—the bleeding Christ on the cross—each of these deep-rooted ideas sprouts poisonously or wholesomely in his diseased brain, spreads, pushes out and springs higher with a ramification of fresh visions, so crowded, that in his encumbered mind he has no further place nor air for more conceptions. Will he rest when he sets forth in the winter on his tramp? During his long solitary wanderings, over wild heaths, in cursed and haunted bogs, always abandoned to his own thoughts, the inevitable idea pursues him. These neglected roads where he sticks in the mud, these sluggish dirty rivers which he crosses on the cranky ferry-boat, these threatening whispers of the woods at night, when in perilous places the livid moon shadows out ambushed forms—all that he sees and hears falls into an involuntary poem around the one absorbing idea: thus it changes into a vast body of visible legends, and multiplies its power as it multiplies its details. Having become a dissenter, Bunyan is shut up for twelve years,

having no other amusement but the " Book of Martyrs " and the Bible, in one of those pestiferous prisons where the Puritans rotted under the Restoration. There he is, still alone, thrown back upon himself by the monotony of his dungeon, besieged by the terrors of the Old Testament, by the vengeful out-pourings of the prophets, by the thunder-striking words of Paul, by the spectacle of trances and of martyrs, face to face with God, now in despair, now consoled, troubled with involuntary images and unlooked-for emotions, seeing alternately devil and angels, the actor and the witness of an internal drama whose vicissitudes he is able to relate. He writes them: it is his book. You see now the condition of this inflamed brain. Poor in ideas, full of images, given up to a fixed and single thought, plunged into this thought by his mechanical pursuit, by his prison and his readings, by his knowledge and his ignorance, circumstances, like nature, make him a visionary and an artist, furnish him with supernatural impressions and visible images, teaching him the history of grace and the means of expressing it.

The " Pilgrim's Progress " is a manual of devotion for the use of simple folk, whilst it is an allegorical poem of grace. In it we hear a man of the people speaking to the people, who would render intelligible to all the terrible doctrine of damnation and salvation.[8] According to Bunyan, we are " children of wrath," condemned from our birth, guilty by nature, justly predestined to destruction. Beneath this formidable thought

[8] This is an abstract of the events: From highest heaven a voice has proclaimed vengeance against the City of Destruction, where lives a sinner of the name of Christian. Terrified, he rises up amid the jeers of his neighbors, and departs, for fear of being devoured by the fire which is to consume the criminals. A helpful man, Evangelist, shows him the right road. A treacherous man, Worldlywise, tries to turn him aside. His companion, Pliable, who had followed him at first, gets stuck in the Slough of Despond, and leaves him. He advances bravely across the dirty water and the slippery mud, and reaches the Strait Gate, where a wise Interpreter instructs him by visible shows, and points out the way to the Heavenly City. He passes before a cross, and the heavy burden of sins, which he carried on his back, is loosened and falls off. He painfully climbs the steep hill of Difficulty, and reaches a great castle, where Watchful, the guardian, gives him in charge to his good daughters Piety and Prudence, who warn him and arm him against the monsters of hell. He finds his road barred by one of these demons, Apollyon, who bids him abjure obedience to the Heavenly King. After a long fight he conquers him. Yet the way grows narrow, the shades fall thicker, sulphurous flames rise along the road: it is the valley of the Shadow of Death. He passes it and arrives at the town of Vanity, a vast fair of business, deceits, and shows, which he walks by with lowered eyes, not wishing to take part in its festivities or falsehoods. The people of the place beat him, throw him into prison, condemn him as a traitor and rebel, burn his companion, Faithful. Escaped from their hands, he falls into those of Giant Despair, who beats him, leaves him in a poisonous dungeon without food, and giving him daggers and cords, advises him to rid himself from so many misfortunes. At last he reaches the Delectable Mountains, whence he sees the holy city. To enter it he has only to cross a deep river, where there is no foothold, where the water dims the sight, and which is called the river of Death.

the heart gives way. The unhappy man relates how he trembled in all his limbs, and in his fits it seemed to him as though the bones of his chest would break. "One day," he tells us, "I walked to a neighboring town, and sat down upon a settle in the street, and fell into a very deep pause about the most fearful state my sin had brought me to; and after long musing, I lifted up my head, but methought I saw, as if the sun that shineth in the heavens did grudge to give light; and as if the very stones in the street, and tiles upon the houses, did band themselves against me. O how happy now was every creature over I was! For they stood fast, and kept their station, but I was gone and lost." [9] The devils gathered together against the repentant sinner; they choked his sight, besieged him with phantoms, yelled at his side to drag him down their precipices; and the black valley into which the pilgrim plunges, almost matches by the horror of its symbols the agony of the terrors by which he is assailed:

"I saw then in my Dream, so far as this Valley reached, there was on the right hand a very deep Ditch; that Ditch is it into which the blind have led the blind in all ages, and have both there miserably perished. Again, behold on the left hand, there was a very dangerous Quag, into which, if even a good man falls, he can find no bottom for his foot to stand on. . . .

"The path-way was here also exceeding narrow, and therefore good Christian was the more put to it; for when he sought in the dark to shun the ditch on the one hand, he was ready to tip over into the mire on the other; also when he sought to escape the mire, without great carefulness he would be ready to fall into the ditch. Thus he went on, and I heard him here sigh bitterly: for, besides the dangers mentioned above, the pathway was here so dark, that ofttimes, when he lift up his foot to set forward he knew not where, or upon what he should set it next.

"About the midst of this Valley, I perceived the mouth of Hell to be, and it stood also hard by the wayside. Now, thought Christian, what shall I do? And ever and anon the flame and smoke would come out in such abundance, with sparks and hideous noises, . . . that he was forced to put up his Sword, and betake himself to another weapon, called All-prayer. So he cried in my hearing: 'O Lord, I beseech thee deliver my soul.' Thus he went on a great while, yet still the flames would be reaching toward him: Also he heard doleful voices, and rushings to and fro, so that sometimes he thought he should be torn in pieces, or trodden down like mire in the Streets." [10]

[9] Bunyan's "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners," sec. 187.

[10] "Pilgrim's Progress," Cambridge, 1862, First Part, p. 64.

Against this agony, neither his good deeds, nor his prayers, nor his justice, nor all the justice and all the prayers of all other men, could defend him. Grace alone justifies. God must impute to him the purity of Christ, and save him by a free choice. What can be more full of passion than the scene in which, under the name of his poor pilgrim, he relates his own doubts, his conversion, his joy, and the sudden change of his heart?

"Then the water stood in mine eyes, and I asked further, But, Lord, may such a great sinner as I am be indeed accepted of thee, and be saved by thee? And I heard him say, And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. . . . And now was my heart full of joy, mine eyes full of tears, and mine affections running over with love to the Name, People, and Ways of Jesus Christ. . . .

"It made me see that all the World, notwithstanding all the righteousness thereof, is in a state of condemnation. It made me see that God the Father, though he be just, can justly justify the coming sinner. It made me greatly ashamed of the vileness of my former life, and confounded me with the sense of mine own ignorance; for there never came thought into my heart before now, that shewed me so the beauty of Jesus Christ. It made me love a holy life, and long to do something for the Honour and Glory of the Name of the Lord Jesus; yea, I thought that had I now a thousand gallons of blood in my body, I could spill it all for the sake of the Lord Jesus." [11]

Such an emotion does not weigh literary calculations. Allegory, the most artificial kind, is natural to Bunyan. If he employs it here, it is because he does so throughout; if he employs it throughout, it is from necessity, not choice. As children, countrymen, and all uncultivated minds, he transforms arguments into parables; he only grasps truth when it is clothed in images; abstract terms elude him; he must touch forms and contemplate colors. Dry general truths are a sort of algebra, acquired by the mind slowly and after much trouble, against our primitive inclination, which is to observe detailed events and visible objects; man being incapable of contemplating pure formulas until he is transformed by ten years' reading and reflection. We understand at once the term purification of heart; Bunyan understands it fully only, after translating it by this fable:

"Then the Interpreter took Christian by the hand, and led him into a very large Parlour that was full of dust, because never swept; the

[11] "Pilgrim's Progress," First Part, p. 160.

which after he had reviewed a little while, the Interpreter called for a man to sweep. Now when he began to sweep, the dust began so abundantly to fly about, that Christian had almost therewith been choaked. Then said the Interpreter to a Damsel that stood by, Bring hither the Water, and sprinkle the Room; the which when she had done, it was swept and cleansed with pleasure.

"Then said Christian, What means this?

"The Interpreter answered, This Parlour is the heart of a man that was never sanctified by the sweet Grace of the Gospel: the dust is his Original Sin, and inward Corruptions, that have defiled the whole man. He that began to sweep at first, is the Law; but she that brought water, and did sprinkle it, is the Gospel. Now, whereas thou sawest that so soon as the first began to sweep, the dust did so fly about that the Room by him could not be cleansed, but that thou wast almost choaked therewith; this to shew thee, that the Law, instead of cleansing the heart (by its working) from sin, doth revive, put strength into and increase it in the soul, even as it doth discover and forbid it for it doth not give power to subdue.

"Again, as thou sawest the Damsel sprinkle the room with Water, upon which it was cleansed with pleasure; this is to shew thee that when the Gospel comes in the sweet and precious influences thereof to the heart, then I say, even as thou sawest the Damsel lay the dust by sprinkling the floor with Water, so is sin vanquished and subdued, and the soul made clean, through the faith of it, and consequently fit for the King of Glory to inhabit." [12]

These repetitions, embarrassed phrases, familiar comparisons, this artless style, whose awkwardness recalls the childish periods of Herodotus, and whose simplicity recalls tales for children, prove that if his work is allegorical, it is so in order that it may be intelligible, and that Bunyan is a poet because he is a child.[13]

If you study him well, however, you will find power under his simplicity, and in his puerility the vision. These allegories are hallucinations as clear, complete, and sound as ordinary perceptions. No one but Spenser is so lucid. Imaginary ob-

[12] "Pilgrim's Progress," First Part, p. 26.

[13] Here is another of his allegories, almost witty, so just and simple it is. See "Pilgrim's Progress," First Part, p. 68: "Now I saw in my Dream, that at the end of this Valley lay blood, bones, ashes, and mangled bodies of men, even of Pilgrims that had gone this way formerly; and while I was musing what should be the reason, I espied a little before me a Cave, where two Giants, Pope and Pagan, dwelt in old time; by whose power and tyranny the men whose bones, blood, ashes, etc., lay there, were cruelly put to death. But by this place Christian went without much danger, whereat I somewhat wondered; but I have learnt since, that Pagan has been dead many a day; and as for the other, though he be yet alive, he is by reason of age, and also of the many shrewd brushes that he met with in his younger days, grown so crazy, and stiff in his joints, that he can now do little more than sit in his Cave's mouth, grinning at Pilgrims as they go by, and biting his nails, because he cannot come at them."

jects rise of themselves before him. He has no trouble in calling them up or forming them. They agree in all their details with all the details of the precept which they represent, as a plant veil fits the body which it covers. He distinguishes and arranges all the parts of the landscape—here the river, on the right the castle, a flag on its left turret, the setting sun three feet lower, an oval cloud in the front part of the sky—with the preciseness of a land surveyor. We fancy in reading him that we are looking at the old maps of the time, in which the striking features of the angular cities are marked on a copperplate by a tool as certain as a pair of compasses.[14] Dialogues flow from his pen as in a dream. He does not seem to be thinking; we should even say that he was not himself there. Events and speeches seem to grow and dispose themselves with him, independently of his will. Nothing, as a rule, is colder than the characters in an allegory; his are living. Looking upon these details so small and familiar, illusion gains upon us. Giant Despair, a simple abstraction, becomes as real in his hands as an English jailer or farmer. He is heard talking by night in bed with his wife Diffidence, who gives him good advice, because here, as in other households, the strong and brutal animal is the least cunning of the two:

"Then she counselled him that when he arose in the morning he should take the two prisoners and beat them without mercy. So when he arose he getteth him a grievous Crab-tree Cudgel, and goes down into the Dungeon to them, and there first falls to rating of them as if they were dogs, although they gave him never a word of distaste. Then he falls upon them, and beats them fearfully, in such sort, that they were not able to help themselves, or to turn them upon the floor." [15]

This stick, chosen with a forester's experience, this instinct of rating first and storming to get one's self into trim for knocking down, are traits which attest the sincerity of the narrator, and succeed in persuading the reader. Bunyan has the copiousness, the tone, the ease, and the clearness of Homer; he is as close to Homer as an Anabaptist tinker could be to a heroic singer, a creator of gods.

I err; he is nearer. Before the sentiment of the sublime, inequalities are levelled. The depth of emotion raises peasant

[14] For instance, Hollar's work, "Cities of Germany."

[15] "Pilgrim's Progress," First Part, p. 126.

and poet to the same eminence; and here, also, allegory stands the peasant in stead. It alone, in the absence of ecstasy, can paint heaven; for it does not pretend to paint it: expressing it by a figure, it declares it invisible, as a glowing sun at which we cannot look straight, and whose image we observe in a mirror or a stream. The ineffable world thus retains all its mystery; warned by the allegory, we imagine splendors beyond all which it presents to us; we feel behind the beauties which are opened to us, the infinite which is concealed; and the ideal city, vanishing as soon as it appears, ceases to resemble the material Whitehall imagined for Jehovah by Milton. Read the arrival of the pilgrims in the celestial land. Saint Theresa has nothing more beautiful:

"Yea, here they heard continually the singing of Birds, and saw every day the Flowers appear in the earth, and heard the voice of the Turtle in the land. In this Country the Sun shineth night and day. . . . Here they were within sight of the City they were going to, also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof; for in this land the Shining Ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of Heaven. . . . Here they heard voices from out of the City, loud voices, saying, 'Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh, behold his reward is with him!' Here all the inhabitants of the Country called them 'The holy People, The redeemed of the Lord, Sought out, etc.'

"Now as they walked in this land, they had more rejoicing than in parts more remote from the Kingdom to which they were bound; and drawing near to the City, they had yet a more perfect view thereof. It was builded of Pearls and Precious Stones, also the Street thereof was paved with gold; so that by reason of the natural glory of the City, and the reflection of the Sun-beams upon it, Christian with desire fell sick; Hopeful also had a fit or two of the same disease. Wherefore here they lay by it awhile, crying out because of their pangs, 'If you see my Beloved, tell him that I am sick of love.'[16] . . .

"They therefore went up here with much agility and speed, though the foundation upon which the City was framed was higher than the Clouds. They therefore went up through the Regions of the Air, sweetly talking as they went, being comforted, because they safely got over the River, and had such glorious companions to attend them.

"The talk that they had with the Shining Ones was about the glory of the place, who told them that the beauty and glory of it was inexpressible. There, said they, is the Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of Angels, and the Spirits of just men made perfect. You are going now, said they, to the Paradise of God, wherein you shall see the Tree of Life, and eat of the never-fading fruits there-

[16] "Pilgrim's Progress," First Part, p. 174.

of; and when you come there, you shall have white Robes given you, and your walk and talk shall be every day with the King, even all the days of Eternity." [17]

"There came out also at this time to meet them, several of the King's Trumpeters, cloathed in white and shining Raiment, who with melodious noises and loud, made even the Heavens to echo with their sound. These Trumpeters saluted Christian and his fellow with ten thousand welcomes from the World, and this they did with shouting and sound of Trumpet.

"This done, they compassed them round on every side; some went before, some behind, and some on the right hand, some on the left (as 't were to guard them through the upper Regions), continually sounding as they went with melodious noise, in notes on high; so that the very sight was to them that could behold it, as if Heaven itself was come down to meet them. . . .

"And now were these two men as 't were in Heaven before they came at it, being swallowed up with the sight of Angels, and with hearing of their melodious notes. Here also they had the City itself in view, and they thought they heard all the Bells therein ring to welcome them thereto. But above all the warm and joyful thoughts that they had about their own dwelling there, with such company, and that for ever and ever. Oh, by what tongue or pen can their glorious joy be expressed! . . ." [18]

"Now I saw in my Dream that these two men went in at the Gate; and lo, as they entered, they were transfigured, and they had Raiment put on that shone like Gold. There was also that met them with Harps and Crowns, and gave them to them, the Harps to praise withal, and the Crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my Dream that all the Bells in the City rang again for joy, and that it was said unto them, 'Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.' I also heard the men themselves, that they sang with a loud voice, saying, 'Blessing, Honour, Glory, and Power, be to him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.'

"Now, just as the Gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold, the City shone like the Sun; the Streets also were paved with Gold, and in them walked many men, with Crowns on their heads, Palms in their hands, and golden Harps to sing praises withal.

"There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord.' And after that they shut up the Gates. Which when I had seen, I wished myself among them." [19]

He was imprisoned for twelve years and a half; in his dungeon he made wire-snares to support himself and his family; he died at the age of sixty in 1688. At the same time Milton

[17] "Pilgrim's Progress," First Part, p. 179.

[18] Ibid. p. 182.

[19] Ibid. p. 183, etc.

lingered obscure and blind. The last two poets of the Reformation thus survived, amid the classical coldness which then dried up English literature, and the social excess which then corrupted English morals. "Shorn hypocrites, psalm-singers, gloomy bigots," such were the names by which men who reformed the manners and renewed the constitution of England were insulted. But oppressed and insulted as they were, their work continued of itself and without noise underground; for the ideal which they had raised was, after all, that which the clime suggested and the race demanded. Gradually Puritanism began to approach the world, and the world to approach Puritanism. The Restoration was to fall into evil odor, the Revolution was to come, and beneath the gradual progress of national sympathy, as well as under the incessant effort of public reflection, parties and doctrines were to rally around a free and moral Protestantism.

CHAPTER SIXTH

MILTON

ON the borders of the licentious Renaissance which was drawing to a close, and of the exact school of poetry which was springing up, between the monotonous conceits of Cowley and the correct gallantries of Waller, appeared a mighty and superb mind, prepared by logic and enthusiasm for eloquence and the epic style; liberal, Protestant, a moralist and a poet, adorning the cause of Algernon Sidney and Locke with the inspiration of Spenser and Shakespeare; the heir of a poetical age, the precursor of an austere age, holding his place between the epoch of unselfish dreaming and the epoch of practical action; like his own Adam, who, taking his way to an unfriendly land, heard behind him, in the closed Eden, the dying strains of heaven.

John Milton was not one of those fevered souls void of self-command, whose rapture takes them by fits, whom a sickly sensibility drives forever to the extreme of sorrow or joy, whose pliability prepares them to produce a variety of characters, whose inquietude condemns them to paint the madness and contradictions of passion. Vast knowledge, close logic, and grand passion; these were his marks. His mind was lucid, his imagination limited. He was incapable of "bating one jot of heart or hope," or of being transformed. He conceived the loftiest of ideal beauties, but he conceived only one. He was not born for the drama, but for the ode. He does not create souls, but constructs arguments, and experiences emotions. Emotions and arguments, all the forces and actions of his soul, assemble and are arranged beneath a unique sentiment, that of the sublime; and the broad river of lyric poetry streams from him impetuous, with even flow, splendid as a cloth of gold.

Section I.—Milton's Family and Education

This dominant sense constituted the greatness and the firmness of his character. Against external fluctuations he found a refuge in himself; and the ideal city which he had built in his soul, endured impregnable to all assaults. It is too beautiful, this inner city, for him to wish to leave it; it was too solid to be destroyed. He believed in the sublime with the whole force of his nature, and the whole authority of his logic; and with him, cultivated reason strengthened by its tests the suggestions of primitive instinct. With this double armor, man can advance firmly through life. He who is always feeding himself with demonstrations is capable of believing, willing, persevering in belief and will; he does not change with every event and every passion, as that fickle and pliable being whom we call a poet; he remains at rest in fixed principles. He is capable of embracing a cause, and of continuing attached to it, whatever may happen, spite of all, to the end. No seduction, no emotion, no accident, no change alters the stability of his conviction or the lucidity of his knowledge. On the first day, on the last day, during the whole time, he preserves intact the entire system of his clear ideas, and the logical vigor of his brain sustains the manly vigor of his heart. When at length, as here, this close logic is employed in the service of noble ideas, enthusiasm is added to constancy. The man holds his opinions not only as true, but as sacred. He fights for them, not only as a soldier, but as a priest. He is impassioned, devoted, religious, heroic. Rarely is such a mixture seen; but it was fully seen in Milton.

He was of a family in which courage, moral nobility, the love of art, were present to whisper the most beautiful and eloquent words around his cradle. His mother was a most exemplary woman, well known through all the neighborhood for her benevolence.[1] His father, a student of Christ Church, and disinherited as a Protestant, had made his fortune by his own energies, and, amidst his occupations as a scrivener or writer, had preserved the taste for letters, being unwilling to give up "his liberal and intelligent tastes to the extent of becoming

[1] Matre probatissimâ et eleemosynis per viciniam potissimum nota.—"Defensio Secunda," "Life of Milton," by Keightley.

altogether a slave to the world"; he wrote verses, was an excellent musician, one of the best composers of his time; he chose Cornelius Jansen to paint his son's portrait when in his tenth year, and gave his child the widest and fullest literary education.[2] Let the reader try to picture this child, in the street (Bread Street) inhabited by merchants, in this citizen-like and scholarly, religious and poetical family, whose manners were regular and their aspirations lofty, where they set the Psalms to music, and wrote madrigals in honor of Oriana the queen,[3] where vocal music, letters, painting, all the adornments of the beautiful Renaissance, decked the sustained gravity, the hard-working honesty, the deep Christianity of the Reformation. All Milton's genius springs from this; he carried the splendor of the Renaissance into the earnestness of the Reformation, the magnificence of Spenser into the severity of Calvin, and, with his family, found himself at the confluence of the two civilizations which he combined. Before he was ten years old he had a learned tutor, "a Puritan, who cut his hair short"; after that he went to Saint Paul's school, then to the University of Cambridge, that he might be instructed in "polite literature"; and at the age of twelve he worked, in spite of his weak eyes and headaches, until midnight and even later. His John the Baptist, a character resembling himself, says:

> "When I was yet a child, no childish play
> To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
> Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,
> What might be public good; myself I thought
> Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
> All righteous things." [4]

At school, afterwards at Cambridge, then with his father, he was strengthening and preparing himself with all his power, free from all blame, and loved by all good men; traversing the vast fields of Greek and Latin literature, not only the great writers, but all the writers, down to the half of the Middle Ages; and studying simultaneously ancient Hebrew, Syriac, and rabbinical Hebrew, French and Spanish, old English literature, all the Italian literature, with such zeal and profit that he wrote

[2] "My father destined me while yet a little child for the study of humane letters."—Life by Masson, 1859, i. 51.

[3] Queen Elizabeth.

[4] The Poetical Works of John Milton, ed. Mitford, "Paradise Regained," Book i. pp. 201-206.

Italian and Latin verse and prose like an Italian or a Roman; in addition to this, music, mathematics, theology, and much besides. A serious thought regulated this great toil. "The church, to whose service, by the intentions of my parents and friends, I was destined of a child, and in mine own resolutions: till coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave and take an oath withal, which unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure, or split his faith; I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking bought, and begun with servitude and forswearing." [5]

He refused to be a clergyman from the same feelings that he had wished it; the desire and the renunciation all sprang from the same source—a fixed resolve to act nobly. Falling back into the life of a layman, be continued to cultivate and perfect himself, studying passionately and with method, but without pedantry or rigor: nay, rather, after his master Spenser, in "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "Comus," he set forth in sparkling and variegated dress the wealth of mythology, nature, and fancy; then, sailing for the land of science and beauty, he visited Italy, made the acquaintance of Grotius and Galileo, sought the society of the learned, the men of letters, the men of the world, listened to the musicians, steeped himself in all the beauties stored up by the Renaissance at Florence and Rome. Everywhere his learning, his fine Italian and Latin style, secured him the friendship and attentions of scholars, so that, on his return to Florence, he "was as well received as if he had returned to his native country." He collected books and music, which he sent to England, and thought of traversing Sicily and Greece, those two homes of ancient letters and arts. Of all the flowers that opened to the Southern sun under the influence of the two great paganisms, he gathered freely the balmiest and the most exquisite, but without staining himself with the mud which surrounded them. "I call the Deity to witness," he wrote later, "that in all those places in which vice meets with so little discouragement, and is practised with so little shame, I never once deviated from the paths of integrity and virtue, and

[5] Milton's Prose Works, ed. Mitford, 8 vols., "The Reason of Church Government," i. 150.

perpetually reflected that, though my conduct might escape the notice of men, it could not elude the inspection of God." [6]

Amid the licentious gallantries and inane sonnets like those which the Cicisbei and Academicians lavished forth, he retained his sublime idea of poetry: he thought to choose a heroic subject from ancient English history; and as he says, "I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men, or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy." [7] Above all, he loved Dante and Petrarch for their purity, telling himself that "if unchastity in a woman, whom St. Paul terms the glory of man, be such a scandal and dishonor, then certainly in a man, who is both the image and glory of God, it must, though commonly not so thought, be much more deflouring and dishonorable." [8] He thought "that every free and gentle spirit, without that oath, ought to be born a knight," for the practice and defence of chastity, and he kept himself virgin till his marriage. Whatever the temptation might be, whatever the attraction or fear, it found him equally opposed and equally firm. From a sense of gravity and propriety he avoided all religious disputes; but if his own creed were attacked, he defended it "without any reserve or fear," even in Rome, before the Jesuits who plotted against him, within a few paces of the Inquisition and the Vatican. Perilous duty, instead of driving him away, attracted him. When the Revolution began to threaten, he returned, drawn by conscience, as a soldier who hastens to danger when he hears the clash of arms, convinced, as he himself tells us, that it was a shame to him leisurely to spend his life abroad, and for his own pleasure, whilst his fellow-countrymen were striving for their liberty. In battle he appeared in the front ranks as a volunteer, courting danger everywhere. Throughout his education and throughout his youth, in his profane readings and his sacred studies, in his acts and his maxims, already a ruling and perma-

[6] Milton's Prose Works (Bohn's edition, 1848), "Second Defence of the People of England," p. 257. See also his Italian Sonnets, with their religious sentiment.

[7] Milton's Prose Works, Mitford, "Apology for Smectymnuus," i. 270.

[8] Ibid. 273. See also his "Treatise on Divorce," which shows clearly Milton's meaning.

nent thought grew manifest—the resolution to develop and unfold within him the ideal man.

Section II.—Milton's Unhappy Domestic Life

Two powers chiefly lead mankind—impulse and idea: the one influencing sensitive, unfettered, poetical souls, capable of transformations, like Shakespeare; the other governing active, combative, heroic souls, capable of immutability, like Milton. The first are sympathetic and effusive; the second are concentrative and reserved.[1] The first give themselves up, the others withhold themselves. These, by reliance and sociability, with an artistic instinct and a sudden imitative comprehension, involuntarily take the tone and disposition of the men and things which surround them, and an immediate counterpoise is effected between the inner and the outer man. Those, by mistrust and rigidity, with a combative instinct and a quick reference to rule, become naturally thrown back upon themselves, and in their narrow limits no longer feel the solicitations and contradictions of their surroundings. They have formed a model, and thenceforth this model like a watchword restrains or urges them on. Like all powers destined to have sway, the inner idea grows and absorbs to its use the rest of their being. They bury it in themselves by meditation, they nourish it with reasoning, they put it in communication with the chain of all their doctrines and all their experiences; so that when a temptation assails them, it is not an isolated principle which it attacks, but it encounters the whole combination of their belief, an infinitely ramified combination, too strong for a sensuous seduction to tear asunder. At the same time a man by habit is upon his guard; the combative attitude is natural to him, and he stands erect, firm in the pride of his courage and the inveteracy of his determination.

A soul thus fortified is like a diver in his bell;[2] it passes through life as he passes through the sea, unstained but isolated. On his return to England, Milton fell back among his books,

[1] "Though Christianity had been but slightly taught me, yet a certain reservedness of natural disposition and moral discipline, learnt out of the noblest philosophy, was enough to keep me in disdain of far less incontinences than this of the bordello."—"Apology for Smectymnuus," Mitford, i. 272.

[2] An expression of Jean Paul Richter. See an excellent article on Milton in the "National Review," July, 1859.

and received a few pupils, upon whom he imposed, as upon himself, continuous toil, serious reading, a frugal diet, a strict behavior; the life of a recluse, almost of a monk. Suddenly in a month, after a country visit, he married.[3] A few weeks afterwards, his wife returned to her father's house, would not come back to him, took no notice of his letters, and sent back his messenger with scorn. The two characters had come into collision. Nothing displeases women more than an austere and self-contained character. They see that they have no hold upon it; its dignity awes them, its pride repels, its preoccupations keep them aloof; they feel themselves of less value, neglected for general interests or speculative curiosities; judged, moreover, and that after an inflexible rule; at most regarded with condescension, as a sort of less reasonable and inferior beings, debarred from the equality which they demand, and the love which alone can reward them for the loss of equality. The "priest" character is made for solitude; the tact, ease, charm, pleasantness, and gentleness necessary to all companionship, are wanting to it; we admire him, but we go no further, especially if, like Milton's wife, we are somewhat dull and commonplace,[4] adding mediocrity of intellect to the repugnance of our hearts. He had, so his biographers say, a certain gravity of nature, or severity of mind which would not condescend to petty things, but kept him in the clouds, in a region which is not that of the household. He was accused of being harsh, choleric; and certainly he stood upon his manly dignity, his authority as a husband, and was not so greatly esteemed, respected, studied, as he thought he deserved to be. In short, he passed the day amongst his books, and the rest of the time his heart lived in an abstracted and sublime world of which few wives catch a glimpse, his wife least of all. He had, in fact, chosen like a student, so much the more at random because his former life had been of "a well-governed and wise appetite." Equally like a man of the closet, he resented her flight, being the more irritated because the world's ways were unknown to him. Without dread of ridicule, and with the sternness of a

[3] 1643, at the age of 35.

[4] "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," Mitford, ii. 27, 29, 32. "Mute and spiritless mate." "The bashful muteness of the virgin may oftentimes hide all the unliveliness and natural sloth which is really unfit for conversation." "A man shall find himself bound fast to an image of earth and phlegm, with whom he looked to be the copartner of a sweet and gladsome society." A pretty woman will say in reply: I cannot love a man who carries his head like the sacrament.

speculative man suddenly brought into collision with actual life, he wrote treatises on divorce, signed them with his name, dedicated them to Parliament, held himself divorced *de facto* because his wife refused to return, *de jure* because he had four texts of Scripture for it; whereupon he paid court to another young lady, and suddenly, seeing his wife on her knees and weeping, forgave her, took her back, renewed the dry and sad marriage-tie, not profiting by experience, but on the other hand fated to contract two other unions, the last with a wife thirty years younger than himself. Other parts of his domestic life were neither better managed nor happier. He had taken his daughters for secretaries, and made them read languages which they did not understand—a repelling task, of which they bitterly complained. In return, he accused them of being "undutiful and unkind," of neglecting him, not caring whether they left him alone, of conspiring with the servants to rob him in their purchases, of stealing his books, so that they would have disposed of the whole of them. Mary, the second, hearing one day that he was going to be married, said that his marriage was no news; the best news would be his death. An incredible speech, and one which throws a strange light on the miseries of this family. Neither circumstances nor nature had created him for happiness.

Section III.—Milton's Combative Energy

They had created him for strife, and after his return to England he had thrown himself heartily into it, armed with logic, anger, and learning, protected by conviction and conscience. When "the liberty of speech was no longer subject to control, all mouths began to be opened against the bishops. . . . I saw that a way was opening for the establishment of real liberty; that the foundation was laying for the deliverance of man from the yoke of slavery and superstition; . . . . and as I had from my youth studied the distinction between religious and civil rights, . . . I determined to relinquish the other pursuits in which I was engaged, and to transfer the whole force of my talents and my industry to this one important object."[1] And thereupon he wrote his "Reformation in England," jeer-

[1] "Second Defence of the People of England," Prose Works (Bohn), i. 257.

ing at and attacking with haughtiness and scorn the prelacy of its defenders. Refuted and attacked in turn, he became still more bitter, and crushed those whom he had beaten.[2] Transported to the limits of his creed, and like a knight making a rush, and who pierces with a dash the whole line of battle, he hurled himself upon the prince, wrote that the abolition of royalty as well as the overthrow of Episcopacy were necessary; and one month after the death of Charles I, justified his execution, replied to the "Eikon Basilike," then to Salmasius's "Defence of the King," with incomparable breadth of style and scorn, like a soldier, like an apostle, like a man who everywhere feels the superiority of his science and logic, who wishes to make it felt, who proudly tramples upon and crushes his adversaries as ignoramuses, inferior minds, base hearts.[3] "Kings most commonly," he says, at the beginning of the "Eikonoklastes," "though strong in legions, are but weak at arguments; as they who ever have accustomed from their cradle to use their will only as their right hand, their reason always as their left. Whence unexpectedly constrained to that kind of combat, they prove but weak and puny adversaries."[4] Yet, for love of those who suffer themselves to be overcome by this dazzling name of royalty, he consents to "take up King Charles's gauntlet"; and bangs him with it in a style calculated to make the imprudent men who had thrown it down repent. Far from recoiling at the accusation of murder, he accepts and boasts of it. He vaunts the regicide, sets it on a triumphal car, decks it in all the light of heaven. He relates with the tone of a judge, "how a most potent king, after he had trampled upon the laws of the nation, and given a shock to its religion, and began to rule at his own will and pleasure, was at last subdued in the field by his own subjects, who had undergone a long slavery under him; how afterwards he was cast into prison, and when he gave no ground, either by words or actions, to hope better things of him, was finally by the supreme council of the kingdom condemned to die, and beheaded before the very gates of the royal palace. . . . For what king's

[2] "Of Reformation touching Church Discipline in England, and the Causes that hitherto have hindered it. Of Prelatical Episcopacy. The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty:" 1641. "Apology for Smectymnuus:" 1642.

[3] "The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates." "Eikonoklastes:" 1648-9. "Defensio Populi Anglicani:" 1651. "Defensio Secunda:" 1654. "Authoris pro se defensio." "Responsio:" 1655.

[4] Milton's Prose Works, Mitford, vol. i. 329.

majesty sitting upon an exalted throne, ever shone so brightly, as that of the people of England then did, when, shaking off that old superstition, which had prevailed a long time, they gave judgment upon the king himself, or rather upon an enemy who had been their king, caught as it were in a net by his own laws (who alone of all mortals challenged to himself impunity by a divine right), and scrupled not to inflict the same punishment upon him, being guilty, which he would have inflicted upon any other?" [5] After having justified the execution, he sanctified it; consecrated it by decrees of heaven after he had authorized it by the laws of the world; from the support of Law he transferred it to the support of God. This is the God who "uses to throw down proud and unruly kings, . . . and utterly to extirpate them and all their family. By his manifest impulse being set on work to recover our almost lost liberty, following him as our guide, and adoring the impresses of his divine power manifested upon all occasions, we went on in no obscure but an illustrious passage, pointed out and made plain to us by God himself." [6] Here the reasoning ends with a song of triumph, and enthusiasm breaks out through the mail of the warrior. Such he displayed himself in all his actions and in all his doctrines. The solid files of bristling and well-ordered arguments which he disposed in battle-array were changed in his heart in the moment of triumph into glorious processions of crowned and resplendent hymns. He was transported by them, he deluded himself, and lived thus alone with the sublime, like a warrior-pontiff, who in his stiff armor, or his glittering stole, stands face to face with truth. Thus absorbed in strife and in his priesthood, he lived out of the world, as blind to palpable facts as he was protected against the seductions of the senses,

[5] Milton's Prose Works, Preface to the "Defence of the People of England," vi. pp. 1, 2.

[6] Mitford, vi. pp. 2-3. This "Defence" was in Latin. Milton ends it thus:

"He (God) has gloriously delivered you, the first of nations, from the two greatest mischiefs of this life, and most pernicious to virtue, tyranny and superstition; he has endued you with greatness of mind to be the first of mankind, who after having conquered their own king, and having had him delivered into their hands, have not scrupled to condemn him judicially, and, pursuant to that sentence of condemnation, to put him to death. After the performing so glorious an action as this, you ought to do nothing that is mean and little, not so much as to think of, much less to do, anything but what is great and sublime. Which to attain to, this is your only way; as you have subdued your enemies in the field, so to make appear, that unarmed, and in the highest outward peace and tranquillity, you of all mankind are best able to subdue ambition, avarice, the love of riches, and can best avoid the corruptions that prosperity is apt to introduce (which generally subdue and triumph over other nations), to show as great justice, temperance, and moderation in the maintaining your liberty, as you have shown courage in freeing yourselves from slavery."—Ibid. vol. vi. 251-2.

placed above the stains and the lessons of experience, as incapable of leading men as of yielding to them. There was nothing in him akin to the devices and delays of the statesman, the crafty schemer, who pauses on his way, experimentalizes, with eyes fixed on what may turn up, who gauges what is possible, and employs logic for practical purposes. Milton was speculative and chimerical. Locked up in his own ideas, he sees but them, is attracted but by them. Is he pleading against the bishops? He would extirpate them at once, without hesitation; he demands that the Presbyterian worship shall be at once established, without forethought, contrivance, hesitation. It is the command of God, it is the duty of the faithful; beware how you trifle with God or temporize with faith. Concord, gentleness, liberty, piety, he sees a whole swarm of virtues issue from this new worship. Let the king fear nothing from it, his power will be all the stronger. Twenty thousand democratic assemblies will take care that his rights be not infringed. These ideas make us smile. We recognize the party-man, who, on the verge of the Restoration, when "the whole multitude was mad with desire for a king," published "A Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth," and described his method at length. We recognize the theorist who, to obtain a law of divorce, only appealed to Scripture, and aimed at transforming the civil constitution of a people by changing the accepted sense of a verse. With closed eyes, sacred text in hand, he advances from consequence to consequence, trampling upon the prejudices, inclinations, habits, wants of men, as if a reasoning or religious spirit were the whole man, as if evidence always created belief, as if belief always resulted in practice, as if, in the struggle of doctrines, truth or justice gave doctrines the victory and sovereignty. To cap all, he sketched out a treatise on education, in which he proposed to teach each pupil every science, every art, and, what is more, every virtue. "He who had the art and proper eloquence . . . might in a short space gain them to an incredible diligence and courage. . . . infusing into their young breasts such an ingenuous and noble ardour as would not fail to make many of them renowned and matchless men."[7] Milton had taught for many years and at various times. A man must be insensible to experience or

[7] "Of Education," Mitford, ii. 385.

doomed to illusions who retains such deceptions after such experiences.

But his obstinacy constituted his power, and the inner constitution, which closed his mind to instruction, armed his heart against weaknesses. With men generally, the source of devotion dries up when in contact with life. Gradually, by dint of frequenting the world, we acquire its tone. We do not choose to be dupes, and to abstain from the license which others allow themselves; we relax our youthful strictness; we even smile, attributing it to our heated blood; we know our own motives, and cease to find ourselves sublime. We end by taking it calmly, and we see the world wag, only trying to avoid shocks, picking up here and there a few little comfortable pleasures. Not so Milton. He lived complete and pure to the end, without loss of heart or weakness; experience could not instruct nor misfortune depress him; he endured all, and repented of nothing. He lost his sight, by his own fault, by writing, though ill, and against the prohibition of his doctors, to justify the English people against the invectives of Salmasius. He saw the funeral of the Republic, the proscription of his doctrines, the defamation of his honor. Around him ran riot, a distaste for liberty, an enthusiasm for slavery. A whole people threw itself at the feet of a young, incapable, and treacherous libertine. The glorious leaders of the Puritan faith were condemned, executed, cut down alive from the gallows, quartered amidst insults; others, whom death had saved from the hangman, were dug up and exposed on the gibbet; others, exiles in foreign lands, lived, threatened and attacked by royalist bullies; others again, more unfortunate, had sold their cause for money and titles, and sat amid the executioners of their former friends. The most pious and austere citizens of England filled the prisons, or wandered about in poverty and shame; and gross vice, impudently seated on the throne, rallied around it a herd of unbridled lusts and sensualities. Milton himself had been constrained to hide; his books had been burned by the hand of the hangman; even after the general act of indemnity he was imprisoned; when set at liberty, he lived in the expectation of being assassinated, for private fanaticism might seize the weapon relinquished by public revenge. Other smaller misfortunes came to aggravate by their stings the great wounds which afflicted him. Confisca-

tions, a bankruptcy, finally, the great fire of London, had robbed him of three-fourths of his fortune;[8] his daughters neither esteemed nor respected him; he sold his books, knowing that his family could not profit by them after his death; and amidst so many private and public miseries, he continued calm. Instead of repudiating what he had done, he gloried in it: instead of being cast down, he increased in firmness. He says, in his twenty-second sonnet:

> "Cyriack, this three years day these eyes, though clear,
> To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
> Bereft of sight, their seeing have forgot;
> Nor to their idle orbs doth day appear
> Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
> Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
> Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate one jot
> Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
> Right onward. What supports me, doth thou ask?
> The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
> In liberty's defence, my noble task;
> Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
> This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
> Content though blind, had I no other guide."[9]

That thought was indeed his guide; he was "armed in himself," and that "breastplate of diamond"[10] which had protected him in his prime against the wounds in battle, protected him in his old age against the temptations and doubts of defeat and adversity.

Section IV.—Milton's Personal Appearance

Milton lived in a small house in London, or in the country, at Horton, in Buckinghamshire, published his "History of Britain," his "Logic," a "Treatise on True Religion and Heresy," meditated his great "Treatise on Christian Doctrine." Of all consolations, work is the most fortifying and the most healthy, because it solaces a man not by bringing him ease, but by re-

[8] A scrivener caused him to lose £2,000. At the Restoration he was refused payment of £2,000 which he had put into the Excise Office, and deprived of an estate of £50 a year, bought by him from the property of the Chapter of Westminster. His house in Bread Street was burnt in the great fire. When he died he is said to have left about £1,500 in money (equivalent to about £5,000 now), besides household goods. [I am indebted to the kindness of Profesor Masson for the collation of this note.—TR.]

[9] Milton's Poetical Works, Mitford, i. Sonnet xxii.

[10] "Italian Sonnets."

quiring him to exert himself. Every morning he had a chapter of the Bible read to him in Hebrew, and remained for some time in silence, grave, in order to meditate on what he had heard. He never went to a place of worship. Independent in religion as in all else, he was sufficient to himself; finding in no sect the marks of the true church, he prayed to God alone, without needing others' help. He studied till mid-day; then, after an hour's exercise, he played the organ or the bass-violin. Then he resumed his studies till six, and in the evening enjoyed the society of his friends. When anyone came to visit him, he was usually found in a room hung with old green hangings, seated in an arm-chair, and dressed neatly in black; his complexion was pale, says one of his visitors, but not sallow; his hands and feet were gouty; his hair, of a light brown, was parted in the midst and fell in long curls; his eyes, gray and clear, showed no sign of blindness. He had been very beautiful in his youth, and his English cheeks, once delicate as a young girl's, retained their color almost to the end. His face, we are told, was pleasing; his straight and manly gait bore witness to intrepidity and courage. Something great and proud breathes out yet from all his portraits; and certainly few men have done so much honor to their kind. Thus went out this noble life, like a setting sun, bright and calm. Amid so many trials, a pure and lofty joy, altogether worthy of him, had been granted to him: the poet, buried under the Puritan, had reappeared, more sublime than ever, to give to Christianity its second Homer. The dazzling dreams of his youth and the reminiscences of his ripe age were found in him, side by side with Calvinistic dogmas and the visions of St. John, to create the Protestant epic of damnation and grace; and the vastness of primitive horizons, the flames of the infernal dungeon, the splendors of the celestial court, opened to the inner eye of the soul unknown regions beyond the sights which the eyes of the flesh had lost.

Section V.—Milton as a Prose Writer

I have before me the formidable volume in which, some time after Milton's death, his prose works were collected.[1] What a

[1] Three vols. folio, 1697-8. The titles of Milton's chief writings in prose are these: "Of Reformation in England;" "The Reason of Church Government

book! The chairs creak when you place it upon them, and a man who had turned its leaves over for an hour, would have less pain in his head than in his arm. As the book, so were the men; from the mere outsides we might gather some notion of the controversialists and theologians whose doctrines they contain. Yet we must conclude that the author was eminently learned, elegant, travelled, philosophic, and a man of the world for his age. We think involuntarily of the portraits of the theologians of those days, severe faces engraved on metal by the hard artist's tool, whose square brows and steady eyes stand out in startling prominence against a dark oak panel. We compare them to modern countenances, in which the delicate and complex features seem to quiver at the varied contact of hardly begun sensations and innumerable ideas. We try to imagine the heavy classical education, the physical exercises, the rude treatment, the rare ideas, the imposed dogmas, which formerly occupied, oppressed, fortified, and hardened the young; and we might fancy ourselves looking at an anatomy of megatheria and mastodons, reconstructed by Cuvier.

The race of living men is changed. Our mind fails us nowadays at the idea of this greatness and this barbarism; but we discover that the barbarism was then the cause of the greatness. As in other times we might have seen, in the primitive slime and among the colossal ferns, ponderous monsters slowly wind their scaly backs, and tear the flesh from one another's sides with their misshapen talons; so now, at a distance, from the height of our calm civilization, we see the battles of the theologians, who, armed with syllogisms, bristling with text, covered one another with filth, and labored to devour each other.

Milton fought in the front rank, preordained to barbarism and greatness by his individual nature and the manners of the time, capable of displaying in high prominence the logic, style, and spirit of his age. It is drawing-room life which trims men into shape: the society of ladies, the lack of serious interests, idleness, vanity, security, are needed to bring men to elegance, urbanity, fine and light humor, to teach the desire to please, the fear to become wearisome, a perfect clearness, a finished pre-

urged against Prelaty;" "Animadversions upon the Remonstrants' Defence;" "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce;" "Tetrachordon;" "Tractate on Education;" "Areopagitica;" "Tenure of Kings and Magistrates;" "Eikonoklastes;" "History of Britain;" "Defence of the People of England."

cision, the art of gradual transitions and delicate tact, a taste for suitable images, continual ease, and choice diversity. Seek nothing like this in Milton. The old scholastic system was not far off; it still weighed on those who were destroying it. Under this secular armor discussion proceeded pedantically, with measured steps. The first thing was to propound a thesis; and Milton writes, in large characters, at the head of his "Treatise on Divorce," "that indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind, arising from a cause in nature unchangeable, hindering, and ever likely to hinder the main benefits of conjugal society, which are solace and peace, is a greater reason of divorce than natural frigidity, especially if there be no children, and that there be mutual consent." And then follow, legion after legion, the disciplined army of the arguments. Battalion after battalion they pass by, numbered very distinctly. There is a dozen of them together, each with its title in clear characters, and the little brigade of subdivisions which it commands. Sacred texts hold the post of honor. Every word of them is discussed, the substantive after the adjective, the verb after the substantive, the preposition after the verb; interpretations, authorities, illustrations, are summoned up, and ranged between palisades of new divisions. And yet there is a lack of order, the question is not reduced to a single idea; we cannot see our way; proofs succeed proofs without logical sequence; we are rather tired out than convinced. We remember that the author speaks to Oxford men, lay or cleric, trained in pretended discussions, capable of obstinate attention, accustomed to digest indigestible books. They are at home in this thorny thicket of scholastic brambles; they beat a path through, somewhat at hazard, hardened against the hurts which repulse us, and not having the smallest idea of the daylight which we require everywhere now.

With such ponderous reasoners, you must not look for wit. Wit is the nimbleness of victorious reason; here, because everything it powerful, all is heavy. When Milton wishes to joke, he looks like one of Cromwell's pikemen, who, entering a room to dance, should fall upon the floor, and that with the extra weight of his armor. Few things could be more stupid than his "Animadversions upon the Remonstrants' Defence." At the end of an argument his adversary concludes with this specimen of theological wit: "In the meanwhile see, brethren, how you

have with Simon fished all night, and caught nothing." And Milton boastfully replies: "If, we, fishing with Simon the apostle, can catch nothing; see what you can catch with Simon Magus; for all his hooks and fishing implements he bequeathed among you." Here a great savage laugh would break out. The spectators saw a charm in this way of insinuating that his adversary was simoniacal. A little before, the latter says: "Tell me, is this liturgy good or evil?" Answer: "It is evil: repair the acheloian horn of your dilemma, how you can, against the next push." The doctors wondered at the fine mythological simile and rejoiced to see the adversary so neatly compared to an ox, a beaten ox, a pagan ox. On the next page the Remonstrant said, by way of a spiritual and mocking reproach: "Truly, brethren, you have not well taken the height of the pole." Answer: "No marvel; there be many more that do not take well the height of your pole, but will take better the declination of your altitude." Three quips of the same savor follow one upon the other; all this looked pretty. Elsewhere, Salmasius exclaiming "that the sun itself never beheld a more outrageous action" than the murder of the king, Milton cleverly answers, "The sun has beheld many things that blind Bernard never saw. But we are content you should mention the sun over and over. And it will be a piece of prudence in you so to do. For though our wickedness does not require it, the coldness of the defence that you are making does."[2] The marvellous heaviness of these conceits betrays minds yet entangled in the swaddling-clothes of learning. The Reformation was the inauguration of free thought, but only the inauguration. Criticism was yet unborn; authority still presses with a full half of its weight upon the freest and boldest minds. Milton, to prove that it was lawful to put a king to death, quotes Orestes, the laws of Publicola, and the death of Nero. His "History of Britain" is a farrago of all the traditions and fables. Under every circumstance he adduces a text of Scripture for proof; his boldness consists in showing himself a bold grammarian, a valorous commentator. He is blindly Protestant as others were blindly Catholic. He leaves in its bondage the higher reason, the mother of principles; he has but emancipated a subordinate reason, an interpreter of

[2] "A Defence of the People of England," Mitford, vi. 21.

texts. Like the vast half shapeless creatures, the birth of early times, he is yet but half man and half mud.

Can we expect urbanity here? Urbanity is the elegant dignity which answers insult by calm irony, and respects man whilst piercing a dogma. Milton coarsely knocks his adversary down. A bristling pedant, born from a Greek lexicon and a Syriac grammar, Salmasius had disgorged upon the English people a vocabulary of insults and a folio of quotations. Milton replies to him in the same style; calling him a buffoon, a mountebank "*professor triobolaris*," a hired pedant, a nobody, a rogue, a heartless being, a wretch, an idiot, sacrilegious, a slave worthy of rods and a pitchfork. A dictionary of big Latin words passed between them. "You, who know so many tongues, who read so many books, who write so much about them, you are yet but an ass." Finding the epithet good, he repeats and sanctifies it. "Oh, most drivelling of asses, you come ridden by a woman, with the cured heads of bishops whom you had wounded, a little image of the great beast of the Apocalypse!" He ends by calling him savage beast, apostate, and devil. "Doubt not that you are reserved for the same end as Judas, and that, driven by despair rather than repentance, self-disgusted, you must one day hang yourself, and like your rival, burst asunder in your belly."[3] We fancy we are listening to the bellowing of two bulls.

They had all a bull's ferocity. Milton was a good hater. He fought with his pen, as the Ironsides with the sword, inch by inch, with a concentrated rancor and a fierce obstinacy. The bishops and the king then suffered for eleven years of despotism. Each man recalled the banishments, confiscations, punishments, the law violated systematically and relentlessly, the liberty of the subject attacked by a well-laid plot, Episcopal idolatry imposed on Christian consciences, the faithful preachers driven into the wilds of America, or given up to the executioner and the stocks.[4] Such reminiscences arising in powerful minds,

[3] Mitford, vi. 250. Salmasius said of the death of the king: "Horribilis nuntius aures nostras atroci vulnere, sed magis mentes perculit." Milton replied: "Profecto nuntius iste horribilis aut gladium multo longiorem eo quem strinxit Petrus habuerit oportet, aut aures istæ auritissimæ fuerint, quas tam longinquo vulnere perculerit."

"Oratorem tam insipidum et insulsum ut ne ex lacrymis quidem ejus mica salis exiguissi ma possit exprimi."

"Salmasius nova quadam metamorphosi salmacis factus est."

[4] I copy from Neal's "History of the Puritans," ii. ch. vii. 367, one of these sorrows and complaints. By the greatness of the outrage the reader can judge of the intensity of the hatred:

"The humble petition of (Dr.) Alex-

stamped them with inexpiable hatred, and the writings of Milton bear witness to a rancor which is now unknown. The impression left by his "Eikonoklastes"[5] is oppressive. Phrase by phrase, harshly, bitterly, the king is refuted and accused to the last, without a minute's respite of accusation, the accused being credited with not the slightest good intention, the slightest excuse, the least show of justice, the accuser never for an instant digressing to or resting upon a general idea. It is a hand-to-hand fight, where every word takes effect, prolonged, obstinate, without dash and without weakness, full of a harsh and fixed hostility, where the only thought is how to wound most severely and to kill surely. Against the bishops, who were alive and powerful, his hatred flowed more violently still, and the fierceness of his envenomed metaphors hardly suffices to express it. Milton points to them "basking in the sunny warmth of wealth and promotion," like a brood of foul reptiles. "The sour leaven of human traditions, mixed in one putrified mass with the poisonous dregs of hypocrisie in the hearts of Prelates, . . . is the serpent's egg that will hatch an Antichrist wheresoever, and ingender the same monster as big or little as the lump is which breeds him."[6]

So much coarseness and dulness was an outer breastplate, the mark and the protection of the superabundant force and life

ander Leighton, Prisoner in the Fleet, Humbly Sheweth,

"That on Feb. 17, 1630, he was apprehended coming from sermon by a high commission warrant, and dragged along the street with bills and staves to London-house. That the gaoler of Newgate being sent for, clapt him in irons, and carried him with a strong power into a loathsome and ruinous dog-hole, full of rats and mice, that had no light but a little grate, and the roof being uncovered, the snow and rain beat in upon him, having no bedding, nor place to make a fire, but the ruins of an old smoaky chimney. In this woeful place he was shut up for fifteen weeks, nobody being suffered to come near him, till at length his wife only was admitted. That the fourth day after his commitment the pursuivant, with a mighty multitude, came to his house to search for jesuit's books, and used his wife in such a barbarous and inhuman manner as he is ashamed to express; that they rifled every person and place, holding a pistol to the breast of a child of five years old, threatening to kill him if he did not discover the books; that they broke open chests, presses, boxes, and carried away everything, even household stuff, apparel, arms, and other things; that at the end of fifteen weeks he was served with a subpœna, on an information laid against him by Sir Robert Heath, attorney-general, whose dealing with him was full of cruelty and deceit; but he was then sick, and, in the opinion of four physicians, thought to be poisoned, because all his hair and skin came off; that in the height of this sickness the cruel sentence was passed upon him mentioned in the year 1630, and executed Nov. 26 following, when he received thirty-six stripes upon his naked back with a threefold cord, his hands being tied to a stake, and then stood almost two hours in the pillory in the frost and snow, before he was branded in the face, his nose slit, and his ears cut off; that after this he was carried by water to the Fleet, and shut up in such a room that he was never well, and after eight years was turned into the common gaol."

[5] An answer to the "Eikon Basilike," a work on the king's side, and attributed to the king.

[6] "Of Reformation in England," 4to, 1641, p. 62.

which coursed in those athletic limbs and chests. Nowadays, the mind, being more refined, has become feebler; convictions, being less stern, have become less strong. Attention, freed from the heavy scholastic logic and scriptural tyranny, has become more inert. Belief and the will, dissolved by universal tolerance and by the thousand opposing shocks of multiplied ideas, have engendered an exact and refined style, an instrument of conversation and pleasure, and have expelled the poetic and rude style, a weapon of war and enthusiasm. If we have effaced ferocity and dulness, we have diminished force and greatness.

Force and greatness are manifested in Milton, displayed in his opinions and his style, the sources of his belief and his talent. This proud reason aspired to unfold itself without shackles; it demanded that reason might unfold itself without shackles. It claimed for humanity what is coveted for itself, and championed every liberty in his every word. From the first he attacked the corpulent bishops, scholastic upstarts, persecutors of free discussion, pensioned tyrants of Christian conscience.[7] Above the clamor of the Protestant Revolution, his voice was heard thundering against tradition and obedience. He sourly railed at the pedantic theologians, devoted worshippers of old texts, who mistook a mouldy martyrology for a solid argument, and answered a demonstration with a quotation. He declared that most of the fathers were turbulent and babbling intriguers, that they were not worth more collectively than individually, that their councils were but a pack of underhand intrigues and vain disputes; he rejected their authority and their example, and set up logic as the only interpreter of Scripture.[8] A Puritan as against bishops, an Independent as against Presbyterians, he was always master of his thought and the inventor of his own faith. No one better loved, practised, and praised the free and bold use of reason. He exercised it even rashly and scandalously. He revolted against custom, the illegitimate queen of human belief, the born and relentless enemy of truth, raised his hand against marriage, and demanded divorce in the case of incompatibility of temper. He declared that "error supports custom, custom countenances error; and these two between them, . . . with the numerous and vulgar train of their fol-

[7] "Of Reformation in England."

[8] The loss of Cicero's works alone, or those of Livy, could not be repaired by all the Fathers of the church.

lowers, . . . envy and cry down the industry of free reasoning, under the terms of humour and innovation." [9] He showed that truth "never comes into the world, but like a bastard, to the ignominy of him that brought her forth; till Time, the midwife rather than the mother of truth, have washed and salted the infant, declared her legitimate." [10] He stood out in three or four writings against the flood of insults and anathemas, and dared even more; he attacked the censorship before Parliament, though its own work; he spoke as a man who is wounded and oppressed, for whom a public prohibition is a personal outrage, who is himself fettered by the fetters of the nation. He does not want the pen of a paid "licenser" to insult by its approval the first page of his book. He hates this ignorant and imperious hand, and claims liberty of writing on the same grounds as he claims liberty of thought:

"What advantage is it to be a man, over it is to be a boy at school, if we have only escaped the ferula, to come under the fescue of an imprimatur? If serious and elaborate writings, as if they were no more than the theme of a grammar-lad under his pedagogue, must not be uttered without the cursory eyes of a temporizing and extemporizing licenser? He who is not trusted with his own actions, his drift not being known to be evil, and standing to the hazard of law and penalty, has no great argument to think himself reputed in the commonwealth wherein he was born for other than a fool or a foreigner. When a man writes to the world, he summons up all his reason and deliberation to assist him; he searches, meditates, is industrious, and likely consults and confers with his judicious friends: after all which done, he takes himself to be informed in what he writes, as well as any that wrote before him; if in this, the most consummate act of his fidelity and ripeness, no years, no industry, no former proof of his abilities, can bring him to that state of maturity, as not to be still mistrusted and suspected, unless he carry all his considerate diligence, all his midnight watchings, and expense of Palladian oil, to the hasty view of an unleisured licenser, perhaps much his younger, perhaps far his inferior in judgment, perhaps one who never knew the labour of book writing; and if he be not repulsed, or slighted, must appear in print like a puny with his guardian, and his censor's hand on the back of his title to be his bail and surety, that he is no idiot or seducer; it cannot be but a dishonour and derogation to the author, to the book, to the privilege and dignity of learning." [11]

[9] "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," Mitford, ii. 4.

[10] Ibid. ii. 5.

[11] "Areopagitica," Mitford, ii. 423.

Throw open, then, all the doors; let there be light; let every man think, and bring his thoughts to the light. Dread not any diversities of opinion, rejoice in this great work; why insult the laborers by the name of schismatics and sectaries?

"Yet these are the men cried out against for schismatics and sectaries, as if, while the temple of the Lord was building, some cutting, some squaring the marble, others hewing the cedars, there should be a sort of irrational men, who could not consider there must be many schisms and many dissections made in the quarry and in the timber ere the house of God can be built. And when every stone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into a continuity, it cannot but be contiguous in this world: neither can every piece of the building be of one form; nay, rather the perfection consists in this, that out of many moderate varieties and brotherly dissimilitudes that are not vastly disproportional, arises the goodly and the graceful symmetry that commends the whole pile and structure." [12]

Milton triumphs here through sympathy; he breaks forth into magnificent images, he displays in his style the force which he perceives around him and in himself. He lauds the revolution, and his praises seem like the blast of a trumpet, to come from a brazen throat:

"Behold now this vast city, a city of refuge, the mansion-house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with his protection; the shop of war has not there more anvils and hammers working, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice in defence of beleagured truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty, the approaching reformation. . . . What could a man require more from a nation so pliant, and so prone to seek after knowledge? What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soil, but wise and faithful labourers, to make a knowing people, a nation of prophets, of sages, and of worthies? [13] . . . Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms." [14]

It is Milton who speaks, and it is Milton whom he unwittingly describes.

[12] "Areopagitica," Mitford, ii. 439. [13] Ibid. 437-8. [14] Ibid. 441.

With a sincere writer, doctrines foretell the style. The sentiments and needs which form and govern his beliefs, construct and color his phrases. The same genius leaves once and again the same impress, in the thought and in the form. The power of logic and enthusiasm which explains the opinions of Milton, explains his genius. The sectary and the writer are one man, and we shall find the faculties of the sectary in the talent of the writer.

When an idea is planted in a logical mind, it grows and fructifies there in a multitude of accessory and explanatory ideas which surround it, entangled among themselves, and form a thicket and a forest. The sentences in Milton are immense; page-long periods are necessary to enclose the train of so many linked arguments, and so many metaphors accumulated around the governing thought. In this great travail, heart and imagination are shaken; Milton exults while he reasons, and the words come as from a catapult, doubling the force of their flight by their heavy weight. I dare not place before a modern reader the gigantic periods which commence the treatise "Of Reformation in England." We no longer possess the power of breath; we only understand little short phrases; we cannot fix our attention on the same point for a page at a time. We require manageable ideas; we have given up the big two-handed sword of our fathers, and we only carry a light foil. I doubt, however, if the piercing phraseology of Voltaire be more mortal than the cleaving of this iron mace:

"If in less noble and almost mechanick arts he is not esteemed to deserve the name of a compleat architect, an excellent painter, or the like, that bears not a generous mind above the peasantly regard of wages and hire; much more must we think him a most imperfect and incompleat Divine, who is so far from being a contemner of filthy lucre; that his whole divinity is moulded and bred up in the beggarly and brutish hopes of a fat prebendary, deanery, or bishoprick." [15]

If Michael Angelo's prophets could speak, it would be in this style; and twenty times while reading it, we may discern the sculptor.

The powerful logic which lengthens the periods sustains the images. If Shakespeare and the nervous poets embrace a picture in the compass of a fleeting expression, break upon their

[15] "Animadversions upon Remonstrants' Defence," Mitford, i. 234-5.

metaphors with new ones, and exhibit successively in the same phrase the same idea in five or six different forms, the abrupt motion of their winged imagination authorizes or explains these varied colors and these mingling flashes. More connected and more master of himself, Milton develops to the end the threads which these poets break. All his images display themselves in little poems, a sort of solid allegory, of which all the interdependent parts concentrate their light on the single idea which they are intended to embellish or demonstrate:

"In this manner the prelates, . . . coming from a mean and plebeian life on a sudden to be lords of stately palaces, rich furniture, delicious fare, and princely attendance, thought the plain and homespun verity of Christ's gospel unfit any longer to hold their lordships' acquaintance, unless the poor threadbare matron were put into better clothes: her chaste and modest veil surrounded with celestial beams, they overlaid with wanton tresses, and in a flaring tire bespeckled her with all the gaudy allurements of a whore." [16]

Politicians reply that this gaudy church supports royalty.

"What greater debasement can there be to royal dignity, whose towering and steadfast height rests upon the unmovable foundations of justice, and heroic virtue, than to chain it in a dependence of subsisting, or ruining, to the painted battlements and gaudy rottenness of prelatry, which want but one puff of the king's to blow them down like a pasteboard house built of court-cards?" [17]

Metaphors thus sustained receive a singular breadth, pomp, and majesty. They are spread forth without clashing together, like the wide folds of a scarlet cloak, bathed in light and fringed with gold.

Do not take these metaphors for an accident. Milton lavishes them, like a priest who in his worship exhibits splendors and wins the eye, to gain the heart. He has been nourished by the reading of Spenser, Drayton, Shakespeare, Beaumont, all the most sparkling poets and the golden flow of the preceding age, though impoverished all around him and slackened within himself, has become enlarged like a lake through being dammed up in his heart. Like Shakespeare, he imagines at every turn, and even out of turn, and scandalizes the classical and French taste.

[16] "Of Reformation in England," first book, Mitford, i. 23.

[17] Ibid. second book, Mitford, i. 42.

". . . As if they could make God earthly and fleshly, because they could not make themselves heavenly and spiritual; they began to draw down all the divine intercourse betwixt God and the soul, yea, the very shape of God himself, into an exterior and bodily form; . . . . they hallowed it, they fumed up, they sprinkled it, they bedecked it, not in robes of pure innocency, but of pure linen, with other deformed and fantastic dresses, in palls and mitres, and gewgaws fetched from Aaron's old wardrobe, or the flaming vestry: then was the priest set to con his motions and his postures, his liturgies and his lurries, till the soul by this means, of overbodying herself, given up justly to fleshly delights, bated her wing apace downward; and finding the ease she had from her visible and sensuous colleague the body, in performance of religious duties, her pinions now broken, and flagging, shifted off from herself the labour of high soaring any more, forgot her heavenly flight, and left the dull and droiling carcase to plod on in the old road, and drudging trade of outward conformity." [18]

If we did not discern here the traces of theological coarseness, we might fancy we were reading an imitator of the "Phædo" and under the fanatical anger recognize the images of Plato. There is one phrase which for manly beauty and enthusiasm recalls the tone of the "Republic": "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." [19] But Milton is only Platonic by his richness and exaltation. For the rest, he is a man of the Renaissance, pedantic and harsh; he insults the Pope, who, after the gift of Pepin le Bref, "never ceased baiting and goring the successors of his best Lord Constantine, what by his barking curses and excommunications"; [20] he is mythological in his defence of the press, showing that formerly "no envious Juno sat cross-legged over the nativity of any man's intellectual offspring.' [21] It matters little: these learned, familiar, grand images, whatever they be, are powerful and natural. Superabundance, like crudity, here only manifests the vigor and lyric dash which Milton's character had foretold.

Passion follows naturally; exaltation brings it with the images. Bold expressions, exaggeration of style, cause us to hear

[18] "Of Reformation in England," book first, Mitford, i. 3.
[19] "Areopagitica," ii. 411-12.
[20] "Of Reformation in England," book second, 40.
[21] "Areopagitica," ii. 406. "Whatsoever time, or the heedless hand of blind chance, hath drawn down from of old to this present, in her huge drag-net, whether fish or sea-weed, shells or shrubs, unpicked, unchosen, those are the fathers." ("Of Prelatical Episcopacy," Mitford.)

the vibrating voice of the suffering man, indignant and determined.

"For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragon's teeth: and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book; who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. It is true, no age can restore a life, whereof, perhaps, there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse. We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against the living labours of public men, how we spill that seasoned life of man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom; and if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at the ethereal and fifth essence, the breath of reason itself; slays an immortality rather than a life." [22]

This energy is sublime; the man is equal to the cause, and never did a loftier eloquence match a loftier truth. Terrible expressions overwhelm the book-tyrants, the profaners of thought, the assassins of liberty. "The council of Trent and the Spanish inquisition, engendering together, brought forth or perfected those catalogues and expurging indexes, that rake through the entrails of many an old good author, with a violation worse than any that could be offered to his tomb." [23] Similar expressions lash the carnal minds which believe without thinking, and make their servility into a religion. There is a passage which, by its bitter familiarity recalls Swift, and surpasses him in all loftiness of imagination and genius:

"A man may be an heretic in the truth, and if he believes things only because his pastor says so, . . . the very truth he holds becomes his heresy. . . . A wealthy man, addicted to his pleasure and to his profits, finds religion to be a traffic so entangled, and of so many piddling accounts, that of all mysteries he cannot skill to keep a stock going upon that trade. . . . What does he therefore, but re-

[22] "Areopagitica," Mitford, ii. 400. [23] Ibid. ii. 404.

solves to give over toiling, and to find himself out some factor, to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs; some divine of note and estimation that must be. To him he adheres, resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all the locks and keys, into his custody; and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion. . . . So that a man may say his religion is now no more within himself, but is become a dividual movable, and goes and comes near him, according as that good man frequents the house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him; his religion comes home at night, prays, is liberally supped, and sumptuously laid to sleep; rises, is saluted, and after the malmsey, or some well-spiced bruage, . . . his religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop trading all day without his religion." [24]

He condescended to mock for an instant, with what piercing irony we have seen. But irony, piercing as it may be, seems to him weak.[25] Hear him when he comes to himself, when he returns to open and serious invective, when after the carnal believer he overwhelms the carnal prelate:

"The table of communion, now become a table of separation, stands like an exalted platform upon the brow of the quire, fortified with bulwark and barricado, to keep off the profane touch of the laics, whilst the obscene and surfeited priest scruples not to paw and mammoc the sacramental bread, as familiarly as his tavern biscuit." [26]

He triumphs in believing that all these profanations are to be avenged. The horrible doctrine of Calvin has once more fixed men's gaze on the dogma of reprobation and everlasting damnation. Hell in hand, Milton menaces; he is drunk with justice and vengeance amid the abysses which he opens, and the brands which he wields:

"They shall be thrown downe eternally into the *darkest* and *deepest Gulfe* of Hell, where, under the *despightfull controule*, the trample and spurne of all the other *Damned*, that in the anguish of their *Torture* shall have no other ease than to exercise a *Raving* and *Bestiall Tyranny* over them as their *Slaves* and *Negro's*, they shall remaine in that plight for ever, the *basest*, the *lowermost*, the *most dejected*, most *underfoot*, and *downetrodden Vassals of Perdition*." [27]

[24] "Areopagitica," ii. 431-2.

[25] When he is simply comic, he becomes, like Hogarth and Swift, eccentric, rude and farcical. "A bishop's foot that has all his toes, maugre the gout, and a linen sock over it, is the aptest emblem of the prelate himself; who, being a pluralist, may, under one surplice, which is also linen, hide four benefices, beside the great metropolitan toe."—"An Apology," etc. i. 275.

[26] "Of Reformation in England," Mitford, i. 17.

[27] Ibid. i. 71. [The old spelling has been retained in this passage.—Tr.]

Fury here mounts to the sublime, and Michael Angelo's Christ is not more inexorable and vengeful.

Let us fill the measure; let us add, as he does, the prospects of heaven to the visions of darkness; the pamphlet becomes a hymn:

"When I recall to mind at last, after so many dark ages, wherein the huge overshadowing train of error had almost swept all the stars out of the firmament of the church; how the bright and blissful Reformation (by divine power) struck through the black and settled night of ignorance and anti-christian tyranny, methinks a sovereign and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom of him that reads or hears; and the sweet odour of the returning gospel imbathe his soul with the fragrancy of heaven." [28]

Overloaded with ornaments, infinitely prolonged, these periods are triumphant choruses of angelic alleluias sung by deep voices to the accompaniment of ten thousand harps of gold. In the midst of his syllogisms, Milton prays, sustained by the accent of the prophets, surrounded by memories of the Bible, ravished with the splendors of the Apocalypse, but checked on the brink of hallucination by science and logic, on the summit of the calm clear atmosphere, without rising to the burning tracts where ecstasy dissolves reason, with a majesty of eloquence and a solemn grandeur never surpassed, whose perfection proves that he has entered his domain, and gives promise of the poet beyond the prose-writer:

"Thou, therefore, that sittest in light and glory unapproachable, parent of angels and men! next, thee I implore, omnipotent King, Redeemer of that lost remnant whose nature thou didst assume, ineffable and everlasting Love! and thou, the third subsistence of divine infinitude, illumining Spirit, the joy and solace of created things! one Tri-personal Godhead! look upon this thy poor and almost spent and expiring church. . . . O let them not bring about their damned designs, . . . to reinvolve us in that pitchy cloud of infernal darkness, where we shall never more see the sun of thy truth again, never hope for the cheerful dawn, never more hear the bird of morning sing." [29]

"O Thou the ever-begotten Light and perfect Image of the Father. . . . Who is there that cannot trace thee now in thy beamy walk through the midst of thy sanctuary, amidst those golden candlesticks, which have long suffered a dimness amongst us through the violence of those that had seized them, and were more taken with the mention of

[28] "Of Reformation in England," Mitford. [29] Ibid. i. 68-69.

their gold than of their starry light? . . . Come therefore, O thou that hast the seven stars in thy right hand, appoint thy chosen priests according to their orders and courses of old, to minister before thee, and duly to press and pour out the consecrated oil into thy holy and ever-burning lamps. Thou hast sent out the spirit of prayer upon thy servants over all the land to this effect, and stirred up their vows as the sound of many waters about thy throne. . . . O perfect and accomplish thy glorious acts! . . . Come forth out of thy royal chambers, O Prince of all kings of the earth! put on the visible robes of thy imperial majesty, take up that unlimited sceptre which thy Almighty Father hath bequeathed thee; for now the voice of thy bride calls thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed." [30]

This song of supplication and joy is an outpouring of splendors; and if we search all literature, we will hardly find a poet equal to this writer of prose.

Is he truly a prose-writer? Entangled dialectics, a heavy and awkward mind, fanatical and ferocious rusticity, an epic grandeur of sustained and superabundant images, the blast and the recklessness of implacable and all-powerful passion, the sublimity of religious and lyric exaltation; we do not recognize in these features a man born to explain, persuade, and prove. The scholasticism and coarseness of the time have blunted or rusted his logic. Imagination and enthusiasm carried him away and enchained him in metaphor. Thus dazzled or marred, he could not produce a perfect work; he did but write useful tracts, called forth by practical interests and actual hate, and fine isolated morsels, inspired by collision with a grand idea, and by the sudden burst of genius. Yet, in all these abandoned fragments, the man shows in his entirety. The systematic and lyric spirit is manifested in the pamphlet as well as in the poem; the faculty of embracing general effects, and of being shaken by them, remains the same in Milton's two careers, and we will see in the "Paradise" and "Comus" what we have met with in the treatise "Of Reformation," and in the "Animadversions on the Remonstrant."

[30] "Animadversions," etc., ibid. 220-2.

Section VI.—Milton as a Poet

"Milton has acknowledged to me," writes Dryden, "that Spenser was his original." In fact, by the purity and elevation of their morals, by the fulness and connection of their style, by the noble chivalric sentiments, and their fine classical arrangement, they are brothers. But Milton had yet other masters—Beaumont, Fletcher, Burton, Drummond, Ben Jonson, Shakespeare, the whole splendid English Renaissance, and behind it the Italian poesy, Latin antiquity, the fine Greek literature, and all the sources whence the English Renaissance sprang. He continued the great current, but in a manner of his own. He took their mythology, their allegories, sometimes their conceits,[1] and discovered anew their rich coloring, their magnificent sentiment of living nature, their inexhaustible admiration of forms and colors. But, at the same time, he transformed their diction, and employed poetry in a new service. He wrote, not by impulse, and at the mere contact with things, but like a man of letters, a classic, in a scholarlike manner, with the assistance of books, seeing objects as much through previous writings as in themselves, adding to his images the images of others, borrowing and recasting their inventions, as an artist who unites and multiplies the bosses and driven gold, already entwined on a diadem by twenty workmen. He made thus for himself a composite and brilliant style, less natural than that of his precursors, less fit for effusions, less akin to the lively first glow of sensation, but more solid, more regular, more capable of concentrating in one large patch of light all their sparkle and splendor. He brings together like Æschylus, words of "six cubits," plumed and decked in purple, and makes them pass like a royal train before his idea to exalt and announce it. He introduces to us

> "The breathing roses of the wood,
> Fair silver-buskin'd nymphs;"[2]

And tells how

> "The gray-hooded Even,
> Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,
> Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain;"[3]

[1] See the "Hymn on the Nativity"; amongst others, the first few strophes. See also "Lycidas."

[2] "Arcades," line 32.

[3] "Comus," lines 188-190.

And speaks of

> " All the sea-girt isles,
> That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
> The unadorned bosom of the deep; " [4]

And

> " That undisturbed song of pure concent,
> Aye sung before the sapphire-colour'd throne,
> To Him that sits thereon,
> With saintly shout, and solemn jubilee;
> Where the bright Seraphim, in burning row,
> Their loud-uplifted angel-trumpets blow." [5]

He gathered into full nosegays the flowers scattered through the other poets:

> " Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
> Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
> On whose fresh lap the swart-star sparely looks;
> Throw hither all your quaint enamell'd eyes,
> That on the green turf suck the honied showers,
> And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
> Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
> The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
> The white pink, and the pansy freak'd with jet,
> The glowing violet,
> The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
> With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
> And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
> Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
> And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
> To strew the laureat herse where Lycid lies." [6]

When still quite young, on his quitting Cambridge, he inclined to the magnificent and grand; he wanted a great flowing verse, an ample and sounding strophe, vast periods of fourteen and four-and-twenty lines. He did not face objects on a level, as a mortal, but from on high, like those archangels of Goethe,[7] who embrace at a glance the whole ocean lashing its coasts and the earth rolling on, wrapped in the harmony of the fraternal stars. It was not life that he felt, like the masters of the Renaissance, but grandeur, like Æschylus, and the Hebrew seers,[8] manly and

[4] " Comus," lines 21-23.
[5] " Ode at a Solemn Musick," lines 6-11.
[6] " Lycidas," lines 136-151.
[7] " Faust," Prolog im Himmel.
[8] See the prophecy against Archbishop Laud in " Lycidas," line 130:
" But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."

lyric spirits like his own, who, nourished like him in religious emotions and continuous enthusiasm, like him displayed sacerdotal pomp and majesty. To express such a sentiment, images, and poetry addressed only to the eyes, were not enough; sounds also were requisite, and that more introspective poetry which, purged from corporeal shows, could reach the soul. Milton was a musician; his hymns rolled with the slowness of a measured song and the gravity of a declamation; and he seems himself to be describing his art in these incomparable verses, which are evolved like the solemn harmony of an anthem:

> "But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness
> Hath lock'd up mortal sense, then listen I
> To the celestial sirens' harmony,
> That sit upon the nine infolded spheres,
> And sing to those that hold the vital shears,
> And turn the adamantine spindle round,
> On which the fate of Gods and men is wound.
> Such sweet compulsion doth in musick lie,
> To lull the daughters of Necessity,
> And keep unsteady Nature to her law,
> And the low world in measured motion draw
> After the heavenly tune, which none can hear
> Of human mould, with gross unpurged ear." [9]

With his style, his subjects differed; he compacted and ennobled the poet's domain as well as his language, and consecrated his thoughts as well as his words. He who knows the true nature of poetry soon finds, as Milton said a little later, what despicable creatures "libidinous and ignorant poetasters" are, and to what religious, glorious, splendid use poetry can be put in things divine and human. "These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God, rarely bestowed, but yet to some (though most abuse) in every nation; and are of power, beside the office of a pulpit, to imbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his church; to sing the victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and

[9] "Arcades," lines 61-73.

triumphs of just and pious nations, doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ." [10]

In fact, from the first, at St. Paul's School and at Cambridge, he had written paraphrases of the Psalms, then composed odes on the Nativity, Circumcision, and the Passion. Presently appeared sad poems on the "Death of a Fair Infant," "An Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester"; then grave and noble verses "On Time," "At a solemn Musick"; a sonnet "On his being arrived to the Age of Twenty-three," "his late spring which no bud or blossom shew'th." At last we have him in the country with his father, and the hopes, dreams, first enchantments of youth, rise from his heart like the morning breath of a summer's day. But what a distance between these calm and bright contemplations and the warm youth, the voluptuous "Adonis" of Shakespeare! He walked, used his eyes, listened; there his joys ended; they are but the poetic joys of the soul:

> "To hear the lark begin his flight,
> And singing, startle the dull night,
> From his watch-tower in the skies,
> Till the dapple dawn doth rise; . . .
> While the plowman, near at hand,
> Whistles o'er the furrow'd land,
> And the milk-maid singeth blithe,
> And the mower whets his sithe,
> And every shepherd tells his tale
> Under the hawthorn in the dale." [11]

To see the village dances and gayety; to look upon the "high triumphs" and the "busy hum of men" in the "tower'd cities"; above all, to abandon himself to melody, to the divine roll of sweet verse, and the charming dreams which they spread before us in a golden light: this is all; and presently, as if he had gone too far, to counterbalance this eulogy of visible joys, he summons Melancholy:

> "Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
> Sober, stedfast, and demure,
> All in a robe of darkest grain,
> Flowing with majestick train,
> And sable stole of Cypress lawn
> Over thy decent shoulders drawn.

[10] "The Reason of Church Government," book ii. Mitford, i. 147.

[11] "L'Allegro," lines 41-68.

Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait;
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes." [12]

With her he wanders amidst grave thoughts and grave sights, which recall a man to his condition, and prepare him for his duties, now amongst the lofty colonnades of primeval trees, whose "high-embowed roof" retains the silence and the twilight under their shade; now in

"The studious cloysters pale, . . .
With antick pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light;" [13]

Now again in the retirement of the study, where the cricket chirps, where the lamp of labor shines, where the mind, alone with the noble minds of the past, may

"Unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind, that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook." [14]

He was filled with this lofty philosophy. Whatever the language he used, English, Italian, or Latin, whatever the kind of verse, sonnets, hymns, stanzas, tragedy or epic, he always returned to it. He praised everywhere chaste love, piety, generosity, heroic force. It was not from scruple, but it was innate in him; his chief need and faculty led him to noble conceptions. He took a delight in admiring, as Shakespeare in creating, as Swift in destroying, as Byron in combating, as Spenser in dreaming. Even on ornamental poems, which were only employed to exhibit costumes and introduce fairy-tales, in Masques, like those of Ben Jonson, he impressed his own character. They were amusements for the castle; he made out of them lectures on magnanimity and constancy: one of them, "Comus," well worked out, with a complete originality and extraordinary elevation of style, is perhaps his masterpiece, and is simply the eulogy of virtue.

[12] "Il Penseroso," lines 31-40. [13] Ibid. lines 156-160. [14] Ibid. lines 88-92.

Here at the beginning we are in the heavens. A spirit, descended in the midst of wild woods, repeats this ode:

> "Before the starry threshold of Jove's court
> My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
> Of bright aerial spirits live insphered
> In regions mild of calm and serene air,
> Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
> Which men call earth; and, with low-thoughted care
> Confined, and pester'd in this pinfold here,
> Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
> Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
> After this mortal change, to her true servants,
> Amongst the enthron'd Gods on sainted seats." [15]

Such characters cannot speak: they sing. The drama is an antique opera, composed like the "Prometheus," of solemn hymns. The spectator is transported beyond the real world. He does not listen to men, but to sentiments. He hears a concert, as in Shakespeare; the "Comus" continues the "Midsummer Night's Dream," as a choir of deep men's voices continues the glowing and sad symphony of the instruments:

> "Through the perplex'd paths of this drear wood,
> The nodding horror of whose shady brows
> Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger," [16]

strays a noble lady, separated from her two brothers, troubled by the "sound of riot and ill-managed merriment" which she hears from afar. The son of Circe the enchantress, sensual Comus enters with a charming rod in one hand, his glass in the other, amid the clamor of men and women, with torches in their hands, "headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts"; it is the hour when

> "The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
> Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;
> And, on the tawny sands and shelves
> Trip the pert faeries and the dapper elves." [17]

The lady is terrified, and sinks on her knees; and in the misty forms which float above in the pale light, perceives the mysterious and heavenly guardians who watch over her life and honor:

> "O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith; white-handed Hope,
> Thou hovering angel, girt with golden wings;

[15] "Comus," lines 1-11. [16] Ibid. lines 37-39. [17] Ibid. lines 115-118.

> And thou, unblemish'd form of Chastity,
> I see ye visibly, and now believe
> That He, the Supreme good, t' whom all things ill
> Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
> Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
> To keep my life and honour unassail'd.
> Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
> Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
> I did not err; there does a sable cloud
> Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
> And casts a gleam over this tufted grove." [18]

She calls her brothers in "a soft and solemn-breathing sound," which "rose like a stream of rich distill'd perfumes, and stole upon the air," [19] across the "violet-embroider'd vale," to the dissolute god whom she enchants. He comes disguised as a "gentle shepherd," and says:

> "Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
> Breathe such divine, enchanting ravishment?
> Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
> And with these raptures moves the vocal air
> To testify his hidden residence.
> How sweetly did they float upon the wings
> Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
> At every fall smoothing the raven down
> Of darkness, till it smiled! I have oft heard
> My mother Circe with the syrens three,
> Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,
> Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs;
> Who, as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,
> And lap it in Elysium: Scylla wept,
> And chid her barking waves into attention. . . .
> But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
> Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
> I never heard till now." [20]

They were heavenly songs which Comus heard; Milton describes, and at the same time imitates them; he makes us understand the saying of his master Plato, that virtuous melodies teach virtue.

Circe's son has by deceit carried off the noble lady, and seats her, with "nerves all chained up," in a sumptuous palace before a table spread with all dainties. She accuses him, resists, insults

[18] "Comus," lines 213-225. [19] Ibid. lines 555-557. [20] Ibid. lines 244-264.

him, and the style assumes an air of heroical indignation, to scorn the offer of the tempter.

> " When lust,
> By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
> But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
> Lets in defilement to the inward parts;
> The soul grows clotted by contagion,
> Imbodies and imbrutes, till she quite lose
> The divine property of her first being.
> Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp,
> Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres
> Lingering, and sitting by a new-made grave,
> As loth to leave the body that it loved." [21]

" A cold shuddering dew dips all o'er " Comus; he presents a cup of wine; at the same instant the brothers, led by the attendant Spirit, rush upon him with swords drawn. He flees, carrying off his magic wand. To free the exchanted lady, they summon Sabrina, the benevolent naiad, who sits

> " Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
> In twisted braids of lilies knitting
> The loose train of thy (her) amber-dropping hair." [22]

The " goddess of the silver lake " rises lightly from her " coral-paven bed," and her chariot " of turkis blue and emerald-green " sets her down

> " By the rushy-fringed bank,
> Where grows the willow, and the osier dank." [23]

Sprinkled by this cool and chaste hand, the lady leaves the " venom'd seat " which held her spell-bound; the brothers, with their sister, reign peacefully in their father's palace; and the Spirit, who has conducted all, pronounces this ode, in which poetry leads up to philosophy; the voluptuous light of an Oriental legend beams on the Elysium of the good, and all the splendors of nature assemble to render virtue more seductive.

> " To the ocean now I fly,
> And those happy climes that lie
> Where day never shuts his eye
> Up in the broad fields of the sky:

[21] " Comus," lines 463-473. It is the elder brother who utters these lines when speaking of his sister.—Tr.

[22] Ibid. lines 861-863.

[23] Ibid. line 890.

There I suck the liquid air
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree:
Along the crisped shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund spring;
The Graces, and the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
Thither all their bounties bring;
There eternal Summer dwells,
And west winds, with musky wing,
About the cedar'n alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hew
Than her purfled scarf can shew;
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List, mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound
In slumber soft; and on the ground
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen:
But far above in spangled sheen
Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced
Holds his dear Psyche sweet entranced
After her wandering labours long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride.
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.
But now my task is smoothly done,
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend:
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.
Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue, she alone is free:
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her." [24]

Ought I to have pointed out the awkwardnesses, strangenesses, exaggerated expressions, the inheritance of the Renais-

[24] "Comus," lines 976-1023.

sance, a philosophical quarrel, the work of a reasoner and a Platonist? I did not perceive these faults. All was effaced before the spectacle of the bright Renaissance, transformed by austere philosophy, and of sublimity worshipped upon an altar of flowers.

That, I think, was his last profane poem. Already, in the one which followed, "Lycidas," celebrating in the style of Vergil the death of a beloved friend,[25] he suffers Puritan wrath and prepossessions to shine through, inveighs against the bad teaching and tyranny of the bishops, and speaks of "that two-handed engine at the door, ready to smite (but) once, and smite no more." On his return from Italy, controversy and action carried him away; prose begins, poetry is arrested. From time to time a patriotic or religious sonnet breaks the long silence; now to praise the chief Puritans, Cromwell, Vane, Fairfax; now to celebrate the death of a pious lady, or the life of a "virtuous young lady"; once to pray God "to avenge his slaughter'd saints," the unhappy Protestants of Piedmont, "whose bones lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold"; again, on his second wife, dead a year after their marriage, his well-beloved "saint" —"brought to me like Alcestis, from the grave, . . . came, vested all in white, pure as her mind"; loyal friendships, sorrows bowed to or subdued, aspirations generous or stoical, which reverses did but purify. Old age came; cut off from power, action, even hope, he returned to the grand dreams of his youth. As of old, he went out of this lower world in search of the sublime; for the actual is petty, and the familiar seems dull. He selects his new characters on the verge of sacred antiquity, as he selected his old ones on the verge of fabulous antiquity, because distance adds to their stature; and habit, ceasing to measure, ceases also to depreciate them. Just now we had creatures of fancy: Joy, daughter of Zephyr and Aurora; Melancholy, daughter of Vesta and Saturn; Comus, son of Circe, ivy-crowned, god of echoing woods and turbulent excess. Now we have Samson, the despiser of giants, the elect of Israel's God, the destroyer of idolaters, Satan and his peers, Christ and his angels; they come and rise before our eyes like superhuman statues; and their far removal, rendering vain our curious hands, preserves our admiration and their majesty. We rise further and higher,

[25] Edward King, died in 1637.

to the origin of things, amongst eternal beings, to the commencement of thought and life, to the battles of God, in this unknown world where sentiments and existences, raised above the ken of man, elude his judgment and criticism to command his veneration and awe; the sustained song of solemn verse unfolds the actions of these shadowy figures; and then we experience the same emotion as in a cathedral, while the music of the organ rolls along among the arches, and amidst the brilliant light of the taper clouds of incense hide from our view the colossal columns.

But if the heart remains unchanged, the genius has become transformed. Manliness has supplanted youth. The richness has decreased, the severity has increased. Seventeen years of fighting and misfortune have steeped his soul in religious ideas. Mythology has yielded to theology; the habit of discussion has ended by subduing the lyric flight; accumulated learning by choking the original genius. The poet no more sings sublime verse, he relates or harangues, in grave verse. He no longer invents a personal style; he imitates antique tragedy or epic. In "Samson Agonistes" he hits upon a cold and lofty tragedy, in "Paradise Regained" on a cold and noble epic; he composes an imperfect and sublime poem in "Paradise Lost."

Would to Heaven he could have written it as he tried, in the shape of a drama, or better, as the "Prometheus" of Æschylus, as a lyric opera! A peculiar kind of subject demands a peculiar kind of style; if you resist, you destroy your work, too happy if, in the deformed medley, chance produces and preserves a few beautiful fragments. To bring the supernatural upon the scene, you must not continue in your every-day mood; if you do, you look as if you did not believe in it. Vision reveals it, and the style of vision must express it. When Spenser writes, he dreams. We listen to the happy concerts of his aërial music, and the varying train of his fanciful apparitions unfolds like a vapor before our accommodating and dazzled gaze. When Dante writes, he is rapt; and his cries of anguish, his transports, the incoherent succession of his infernal or mystical phantoms, carry us with him into the invisible world which he describes. Ecstasy alone renders visible and credible the objects of ecstasy. If you tell us of the exploits of the Deity as you tell us of Cromwell's, in a grave and lofty tone, we do not see God; and as He

constitutes the whole of your poem, we do not see anything. We conclude that you have accepted a tradition, that you adorn it with the fictions of your mind, that you are a preacher, not a prophet, a decorator, not a poet. We find that you sing of God as the vulgar pray to him, after a formula learnt, not from spontaneous emotion. Change your style, or, rather if you can, change your emotion. Try and discover in yourself the ancient fervor of psalmists and apostles, to recreate the divine legend, to experience the sublime agitations by which the inspired and disturbed mind perceives God; then the grand lyric verse will roll on, laden with splendors. Thus roused, we shall not have to examine whether it be Adam or Messiah who speaks; we shall not have to demand that they shall be real, and constructed by the hand of a psychologist; we shall not trouble ourselves with their puerile or unlooked-for actions; we shall be carried away, we shall share in your creative madness; we shall be drawn onward by the flow of bold images, or raised by the combination of gigantic metaphors; we shall be moved like Æschylus, when his thunder-stricken Prometheus hears the universal concert of rivers, seas, forests, and created beings, lament with him,[26] as David before Jehovah, for whom a thousand years are but as yesterday, who "carriest them away as with a flood; in the morning they are like grass which groweth up." [27]

But the age of metaphysical inspiration, long gone by, had not yet reappeared. Far in the past Dante was fading away; far in the future Goethe lay unrevealed. People saw not yet the pantheistic Faust, and that incomprehensible nature which absorbs all varying existence in her deep bosom; they saw no longer the mystic paradise and immortal Love, whose ideal light envelops souls redeemed. Protestantism had neither altered nor renewed the divine nature; the guardian of an accepted creed and ancient tradition, it had only transformed ecclesiastical discipline and the doctrine of grace. It had only called the Christian to personal salvation and freedom from priestly rule. It had only remodelled man, it had not recreated the Deity. It could not produce a divine epic, but a human epic. It could not sing the battles and

[26] ὦ δῖος αἰθὴρ καὶ ταχύπτεροι πνοαί
ποταμῶν τε πηγαί, ποντίων τε κυμάτων
ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα, παμμῆτόρ τε γῆ.
καὶ τὸν πανόπτην κύκλον ἡλίου καλῶ,
ἴδεσθέ μ', οἷα πρὸς θεῶν πάσχω θεός.
—"Prometheus Vinctus," ed. Hermann, p. 487, line 88.—Tr.

[27] Psalm xc. 5.

works of God, but the temptations and salvation of the soul. At the time of Christ came the poems of cosmogony; at the time of Milton, the confessions of psychology. At the time of Christ each imagination produced a hierarchy of supernatural beings, and a history of the world; at the time of Milton, every heart recorded the series of its upliftings, and the history of grace. Learning and reflection led Milton to a metaphysical poem which was not the natural offspring of the age, whilst inspiration and ignorance revealed to Bunyan the psychological narrative which suited the age, and the great man's genius was feebler than the tinker's simplicity.

And why? Because Milton's poem, whilst it suppresses lyrical illusion, admits critical inquiry. Free from enthusiasm we judge his characters; we demand that they shall be living, real, complete, harmonious, like those of a novel or a drama. No longer hearing odes, we would see objects and souls: we ask that Adam and Eve should act in conformity with their primitive nature; that God, Satan, and Messiah should act and feel in conformity with their superhuman nature. Shakespeare would scarcely have been equal to the task; Milton, the logician and reasoner, failed in it. He gives us correct solemn discourse, and gives us nothing more; his characters are speeches, and in their sentiments we find only heaps of puerilities and contradictions.

Adam and Eve, the first pair! I approach, and it seems as though I discovered the Adam and Eve of Raphael Sanzio, imitated by Milton, so his biographers tell us, glorious, strong, voluptuous children, naked in the light of heaven, motionless and absorbed before grand landscapes, with bright vacant eyes, with no more thought than the bull or the horse on the grass beside them. I listen, and I hear an English household, two reasoners of the period—Colonel Hutchinson and his wife. Good Heavens! dress them at once. People with so much culture should have invented before all a pair of trousers and modesty. What dialogues! Dissertations capped by politeness, mutual sermons concluded by bows. What bows! Philosophical compliments and moral smiles. I yielded, says Eve,

> "And from that time see
> How beauty is excell'd by manly grace
> And wisdom, which alone is truly fair." [28]

[28] "Paradise Lost," book iv. line 489.

Dear learned poet, you would have been better pleased if one of your three wives, as an apt pupil, had uttered to you by way of conclusion the above solid theoretical maxim. They did utter it to you; this is a scene from your own household:

> "So spake our general mother; and, with eyes
> Of conjugal attraction unreproved
> And meek surrender, half-embracing lean'd
> On our first father; half her swelling breast
> Naked met his, under the flowing gold
> Of her loose tresses hid; he, in delight
> Both of her beauty and submissive charms,
> Smiled with superiour love, . . . and press'd her matron lip
> With kisses pure." [29]

This Adam entered Paradise *via* England. In that country he learned respectability, and studied moral speechifying. Let us hear this man before he has tasted of the tree of knowledge. A bachelor of arts, in his inaugural address, could not utter more fitly and nobly a greater number of pithless sentences:

> "Fair consort, the hour
> Of night, and all things now retired to rest,
> Mind us like repose; since God hath set
> Labour and rest, as day and night, to men
> Successive; and the timely dew of sleep,
> Now falling with soft slumbrous weight, inclines
> Our eyelids; other creatures all day long
> Rove idle, unemploy'd, and less need rest:
> Man hath his daily work of body or mind
> Appointed, which declares his dignity,
> And the regard of Heaven on all his ways;
> While other animals unactive range,
> And of their doings God takes no account." [30]

A very useful and excellent Puritanical exhortation! This is English virtue and morality; and at evening, in every family, it can be read to the children like the Bible. Adam is your true paterfamilias, with a vote, an M.P., an old Oxford man, consulted at need by his wife, dealing out to her with prudent measure the scientific explanations which she requires. This night, for instance, the poor lady had a bad dream, and Adam,

[29] "Paradise Lost," lines 492-502. [30] Ibid. lines 610-622.

in his trencher-cap, administers this learned psychological draught: [31]

> "Know, that in the soul
> Are many lesser faculties that serve
> Reason as chief; among these Fancy next
> Her office holds; of all external things,
> Which the five watchful senses represent,
> She forms imaginations, aery shapes
> Which Reason, joining or disjoining, frames
> All what we affirm or what deny, and call
> Our knowledge on opinion. . . .
> Oft in her absence mimic fancy wakes
> To imitate her; but, misjoining shapes,
> Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams;
> Ill matching words and deeds long past or late." [32]

Here was something to send Eve off to sleep again. Her husband noting the effect, adds like an accredited casuist:

> "Yet be not sad:
> Evil into the mind of God or man
> May come and go, so unapproved; and leave
> No spot or blame behind." [33]

We recognize the Protestant husband, his wife's confessor. Next day comes an angel on a visit. Adam tells Eve:

> "Go with speed,
> And, what thy stores contain, bring forth, and pour
> Abundance, fit to honour and receive
> Our heavenly stranger." [34]

She, like a good housewife, talks about the *menu*, and rather proud of her kitchen garden, says:

> "He
> Beholding shall confess, that here on earth
> God hath dispensed his bounties as in heaven." [35]

Mark this becoming zeal of a hospitable lady. She goes "with dispatchful looks, in haste":

> "What choice to choose for delicacy best;
> What order, so contrived as not to mix

[31] It would be impossible that a man so learned, so argumentative, should spend his whole time in gardening and making up nosegays.

[32] "Paradise Lost," book v. lines 100-113.

[33] Ibid. lines 116-119.

[34] Ibid. lines 313-316.

[35] Ibid. lines 328-330.

Tastes, not well join'd, inelegant; but bring
Taste after taste upheld with kindliest change." [36]

She makes sweet wine, perry, creams; scatters flowers and leaves under the table. What an excellent housewife! What a great many votes she will gain among the country squires, when Adam stands for Parliament. Adam belongs to the Opposition, is a Whig, a Puritan.

He "walks forth; without more train
Accompanied than with his own complete
Perfections: in himself was all his state,
More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
On princes, when their rich retinue long
Of horses led, and grooms besmeared with gold,
Dazzles the crowd." [37]

The epic is changed into a political poem, and we have just heard an epigram against power. The preliminary ceremonies are somewhat long; fortunately, the dishes being uncooked, "no fear lest dinner cool." The angel, though ethereal, eats like a Lincolnshire farmer:

"Nor seemingly
The angel, nor in mist, the common gloss
Of theologians; but with keen dispatch
Of real hunger, and concoctive heat
To transubstantiate: what redounds, transpires
Through spirits with ease." [38]

At table Eve listens to the angel's stories, then discreetly rises at dessert, when they are getting into politics. English ladies may learn by her example to perceive from their lord's faces when they are "entering on studious thoughts abstruse." The sex does not mount so high. A wise lady prefers her husband's talk to that of strangers. "Her husband the relater she prefered." Now Adam hears a little treatise on astronomy. He concludes, like a practical Englishman:

"But to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom: what is more, is fume,
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence;

[36] "Paradise Lost," book v. lines 333-336.
[37] Ibid. lines 351-357.
[38] Ibid. lines 434-439.

> And renders us, in things that most concern,
> Unpracticed, unprepared, and still to seek." [39]

The angel gone, Eve, dissatisfied with her garden, wishes to have it improved, and proposes to her husband to work in it, she on one side, he on the other. He says, with an approving smile:

> " Nothing lovelier can be found
> In woman, than to study household good,
> And good works in her husband to promote." [40]

But he fears for her, and would keep her at his side. She rebels with a little prick of proud vanity, like a young lady who mayn't go out by herself. She has her way, goes alone and eats the apple. Here interminable speeches come down on the reader, as numerous and cold as winter showers. The speeches of Parliament after Pride's Purge were hardly heavier. The serpent seduces Eve by a collection of arguments worthy of the punctilious Chillingworth, and then the syllogistic mist enters her poor brain:

> " His forbidding
> Commends thee more, while it infers the good
> By thee communicated, and our want:
> For good unknown sure is not had; or, had
> And yet unknown, is as not had at all. . . .
> Such prohibitions bind not." [41]

Eve is from Oxford too, has also learned law in the inns about the Temple, and wears, like her husband, the doctor's trencher-cap.

The flow of dissertations never ceases, from Paradise it gets into heaven: neither heaven nor earth, nor hell itself, would swamp it.

Of all characters which man could bring upon the scene, God is the finest. The cosmogonies of peoples are sublime poems, and the artist's genius does not attain perfection until it is sustained by such conceptions. The Hindoo sacred poems, the Biblical prophecies, the Edda, the Olympus of Hesiod and Homer, the visions of Dante, are glowing flowers from which a whole civilization blooms, and every emotion vanishes before the terrible feeling through which they have leaped from the bottom of our heart. Nothing then can be more depressing than the

[39] " Paradise Lost," book viii. lines 102-107.

[40] Ibid. book ix. line 232.

[41] Ibid. book ix. lines 753-760.

degradation of these noble ideas, settling into the regularity of formulas, and under the discipline of a popular worship. What is smaller than a god sunk to the level of a king and a man, what more repulsive than the Hebrew Jehovah, defined by theological pedantry, governed in his actions by the last manual of doctrine, petrified by literal interpretation?

Milton's Jehovah is a grave king, who maintains a suitable state, something like Charles I. When we meet him for the first time, in Book III., he is holding council, and setting forth a matter of business. From the style we see his grand furred cloak, his pointed Vandyke beard, his velvet-covered throne and golden dais. The business concerns a law which does not act well, and respecting which he desires to justify his rule. Adam is about to eat the apple: why have exposed Adam to the temptation? The royal orator discusses the question, and shows the reason:

> "I made him just and right,
> Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
> Such I created all the ethereal powers
> And spirits, both them who stood and them who fail'd. . . .
> Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
> Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love?
> Where only, what they needs must do, appear'd,
> Not what they would: what praise could they receive?
> What pleasure I from such obedience paid?
> When will and reason (reason also is choice),
> Useless and vain, of freedom both despoil'd,
> Made passive both, had served necessity,
> Not me. They therefore, as to right belong'd,
> So were created, nor can justly accuse
> Their Maker, or their making, or their fate;
> As if predestination over-ruled
> Their will, disposed by absolute decree
> Or high foreknowledge: they themselves decreed
> Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,
> Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
> Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
> So without least impulse or shadow of fate,
> Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
> They trespass, authors to themselves in all,
> Both what they judge and what they choose." [42]

The modern reader is not so patient as the Thrones, Seraphim, and Dominations; this is why I stop half-way in the royal

[42] "Paradise Lost," book iii lines 98-123.

speech. We perceive that Milton's Jehovah is connected with the theologian James I, versed in the arguments of Arminians and Gomarists, very clever at the *distinguo*, and, before all, incomparably tedious. He must pay his councillors of state very well if he wishes them to listen to such tirades. His son answers him respectfully in the same style. Goethe's God, half abstraction, half legend, source of calm oracles, a vision just beheld after a pyramid of ecstatic strophes,[43] greatly excels this Miltonic God, a business man, a schoolmaster, an ostentatious man! I honor him too much in giving him these titles. He deserves a worse name, when he sends Raphael to warn Adam that Satan intends him some mischief:

> " This let him know,
> Lest, wilfully transgressing, he pretend
> Surprisal, unadmonish'd, unforewarn'd." [44]

This Miltonic Deity is only a schoolmaster, who, foreseeing the fault of his pupil, tells him beforehand the grammar rule, so as to have the pleasure of scolding him without discussion. Moreover, like a good politician, he had a second motive, just as with his angels, " For state, as Sovran King; and to inure our prompt obedience." The word is out; we see what Milton's heaven is: a Whitehall filled with bedizened footmen. The angels are the choristers, whose business is to sing cantatas about the king and before the king, keeping their places as long as they obey, alternating all night long to sing " melodious hymns about the sovran throne." What a life for this poor king! and what a cruel condition, to hear eternally his own praises! [45] To amuse himself, Milton's Deity decides to crown his son king—partner-king, if you prefer it. Read the passage, and say if it be not a ceremony of his time that the poet describes:

> " Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced,
> Standards and gonfalons 'twixt van and rear
> Stream in the air, and for distinction serve
> Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees:
> Or in their glittering tissues bear imblazed

[43] End of the continuation of "Faust." Prologue in Heaven.

[44] " Paradise Lost," book v. line 243.

[45] We are reminded of the history of Ira in Voltaire, condemned to hear without intermission or end the praises of four chamberlains, and the following hymn:

" Que son mérite est extrême!
Que de grâces, que de grandeur.
Ah! combien monseigneur
Doit être content de lui-même! "

> Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love
> Recorded eminent;" [46]

doubtless the capture of a Dutch vessel, the defeat of the Spaniards in the Downs. The king brings forward his son, "anoints" him, declares him "his great vicegerent":

> "To him shall bow
> All knees in heaven. . . . Him who disobeys,
> Me disobeys;" [47]

and such were, in fact, expelled from heaven the same day. "All seem'd well pleased; all seem'd, but were not all." Yet

> "That day, as other solemn days, they spent
> In song and dance about the sacred hill. . . .
> Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn
> Desirous." [48]

Milton describes the tables, the dishes, the wine, the vessels. It is a popular festival; I miss the fireworks, the bell-ringing, as in London, and I can fancy that all would drink to the health of the new king. Then Satan revolts; he takes his troops to the other end of the country, like Lambert or Monk, toward "the quarters of the north," Scotland perhaps, passing through well-governed districts, "empires," with their sheriffs and lord lieutenants. Heaven is partitioned off like a good map. Satan holds forth before his officers against royalty, opposes in a word-combat the god royalist Abdiel, who refutes his "blasphemous, false, and proud" arguments, and quits him to rejoin his prince at Oxford. Well armed, the rebel marches with his pikemen and artillery to attack the fortress.[49] The two parties slash each other with the sword, mow each other down with cannon, knock each other down with political arguments. These sorry angels have their mind as well disciplined as their limbs; they have passed their youth in a class of logic and in a drill school. Satan holds forth like a preacher:

> "What heaven's Lord had powerfulest to send
> Against us from about his throne, and judged,
> "Lest unawares we lose
> This our high place, our Sanctuary, our Hill."
> His son, about to flesh his maiden sword, replies:
> "If I be found the worst in heaven," etc.
>
> Book v. lines 731-742.

[46] "Paradise Lost," book v. lines 588-594.
[47] Ibid. lines 607-612.
[48] Ibid. lines 617-631.
[49] The Miltonic Deity is so much on the level of a king and man, that he uses (with irony certainly) words like these:

Sufficient to subdue us to his will,
But proves not so: then fallible, it seems,
Of future we may deem him, though till now
Omniscient thought." [50]

He also talks like a drill sergeant. "Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold." He makes quips as clumsy as those of Harrison, the former butcher turned officer. What a heaven! It is enough to disgust a man with Paradise; anyone would rather enter Charles I's troop of lackeys, or Cromwell's Ironsides. We have orders of the day, a hierarchy, exact submission, extra-duties, disputes, regulated ceremonials, prostrations, etiquette, furbished arms, arsenals, depots of chariots and ammunition. Was it worth while leaving earth to find in heaven carriage-works, buildings, artillery, a manual of tactics, the art of salutations, and the Almanach de Gotha? Are these the things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart to conceive"? What a gap between this monarchical frippery [51] and the visions of Dante, the souls floating like stars amid the harmonies, the mingled splendors, the mystic roses radiating and vanishing in the azure, the impalpable world in which all the laws of earthly life are dissolved, the unfathomable abyss traversed by fleeting visions, like golden bees gliding in the rays of the deep central sun! Is it not a sign of extinguished imagination, of the inroad of prose, of the birth of practical genius, replacing metaphysics by morality? What a fall! To measure it, read a true Christian poem, the Apocalypse. I copy half a dozen verses; think what it has become in the hands of the imitator:

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

"His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

"And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

[50] "Paradise Lost," book vi. lines 425-430.

[51] When Raphael comes on earth, the angels who are "under watch," "in honour rise." The disagreeable and characteristic feature of this heaven is, that the universal motive is obedience, while in Dante's it is love. "Lowly reverent they bow. . . . Our happy state we hold, like yours, while our obedience holds."

"And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." [52]

When Milton was arranging his celestial show, he did not fall as dead.

But if the innate and inveterate habits of logical argument, joined with the literal theology of the time, prevented him from attaining to lyrical illusion or from creating living souls, the splendor of his grand imagination, combined with the passions of Puritanism, furnished him with a heroic character, several sublime hymns, and scenery which no one has surpassed. The finest thing in connection with this Paradise is hell; and in this history of God, the chief part is taken by the devil. The ridiculous devil of the Middle Ages, a horned enchanter, a dirty jester, a petty and mischievous ape, band-leader to a rabble of old women, has become a giant and a hero. Like a conquered and banished Cromwell, he remains admired and obeyed by those whom he has drawn into the abyss. If he continues master, it is because he deserves it; firmer, more enterprising, more scheming than the rest, it is always from him that deep counsels, unlooked-for resources, courageous deeds, proceed. It was he who invented "deep-throated engines . . . disgorging, . . . chained thunderbolts, and hail of iron globes," and won the scond day's victory; he who in hell roused his dejected troops, and planned the ruin of man; he who, passing the guarded gates and the boundless chaos, amid so many dangers, and across so many obstacles, made man revolt against God, and gained for hell the whole posterity of the new-born. Though defeated, he prevails, since he has won from the monarch on high the third part of his angels, and almost all the sons of his Adam. Though wounded, he triumphs, for the thunder which smote his head left his heart invincible. Though feebler in force, he remains superior in nobility, since he prefers suffering independence to happy servility, and welcomes his defeat and his torments as a glory, a liberty, and a joy. These are the proud and sombre political passions of the constant though oppressed Puritans; Milton had felt them in the vicissitudes of war, and the emigrants who had taken ref-

[52] Revelation, i. 12.

uge amongst the wild beasts and savages of America, found them strong and energetic in the depths of their hearts.

"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,
Said then the lost Archangel, this the seat
That we must change for heaven? this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he,
Who now is Sovran, can dispose and bid
What shall be right: farthest from him is best,
Whom reason has equall'd, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy forever dwells! Hail, horrors; hail,
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessor; one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be; all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy; will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign secure; and in my choice
To reign is worth ambition, though in hell:
Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven." [53]

This sombre heroism, this harsh obstinacy, this biting irony, these proud stiff arms which clasp grief as a mistress, this concentration of invincible courage which, cast on its own resources, finds everything in itself, this power of passion and sway over passion,

"The unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield,
And what is else not to be overcome," [54]

are features proper to the English character and to English literature, and you will find them later on in Byron's Lara and Conrad.

Around the fallen angel, as within him, all is great. Dante's hell is but a hall of tortures, whose cells, one below another, descend to the deepest wells. Milton's hell is vast and vague.

"A dungeon horrible on all sides round
As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames

[53] "Paradise Lost," book i. lines 242-263. [54] Ibid. lines 106-109.

No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades. . . ." [55]

"Beyond this flood a frozen continent
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
Of ancient pile." [56]

The angels gather, innumerable legions:

"As when heaven's fire
Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,
With singed top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath." [57]

Milton needs the grand and infinite; he lavishes them. His eyes are only content in limitless space, and he produces colossal figures to fill it. Such is Satan wallowing on the surges of the livid sea:

"In bulk as huge . . . as . . . that sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream:
Him, haply, slumbering on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-founder'd skiff,
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wished morn delays." [58]

Spenser has discovered images just as fine, but he has not the tragic gravity which the idea of hell impresses on a Protestant. No poetic creation equals in horror and grandeur the spectacle that greeted Satan on leaving his dungeon:

"At last appear
Hell bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass;
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable shape;
The one seem'd woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold

[55] "Paradise Lost," book i. lines 61-65.
[56] Ibid. book ii. lines 587-591.
[57] Ibid. book i. lines 612-615.
[58] Ibid. lines 100-109.

Voluminous and vast, a serpent arm'd
With mortal sting: about her middle round
A cry of hell-hounds never ceasing bark'd
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung
A hideous peal: yet, when they list, would creep,
If aught disturb'd their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there; yet there still bark'd and howl'd
Within unseen. . . . The other shape,
If shape it might be call'd, that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd,
For each seem'd either: black it stood as night,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
And shook a dreadful dart; what seem'd his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
The monster moving onward came as fast,
With horrid strides; hell trembled as he strode.
The undaunted fiend what this might be admired,
Admired, not fear'd." [59]

The heroic glow of the old soldier of the Civil Wars animates the infernal battle; and if anyone were to ask why Milton creates things greater than other men, I should answer, because he has a greater heart.

Hence the sublimity of his scenery. If I did not fear the paradox, I should say that this scenery was a school of virtue. Spenser is a smooth glass, which fills us with calm images. Shakespeare is a burning mirror, which overpowers us, repeatedly, with multiplied and dazzling visions. The one distracts, the other disturbs us. Milton raises our mind. The force of the objects which he describes passes into us; we become great by sympathy with their greatness. Such is the effect of his description of the Creation. The calm and creative command of the Messiah leaves its trace in the heart which listens to it, and we feel more vigor and moral health at the sight of this great work of wisdom and will:

"On heavenly ground they stood; and from the shore
They view'd the vast immeasurable abyss
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds
And surging waves, as mountains, to assault
Heaven's highth, and with the centre mix the pole.

[59] "Paradise Lost," book ii. lines 643-678.

'Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou deep, peace,'
Said then the omnific Word: 'Your discord end!' . . .
Let there be light, said God; and forthwith light
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
Sprung from the deep; and from her native east
To journey through the aery gloom began,
Sphered in a radiant cloud. . . .
The earth was form'd; but in the womb as yet
Of waters, embryon immature involved,
Appear'd not: over all the face of earth
Main ocean flow'd, not idle, but, with warm
Prolific humour softening all her globe,
Fermented the great mother to conceive,
Satiate with genial moisture, when God said,
'Be gather'd now, ye waters under heaven,
Into one place, and let dry land appear.'
Immediately the mountains huge appear
Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
Into the clouds, their tops ascend the sky:
So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low
Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
Capacious bed of waters: thither they
Hasted with glad precipitance, uproll'd,
As drops on dust conglobing from the dry." [60]

This is primitive scenery; immense bare seas and mountains, as Raphael Sanzio outlines them in the background of his biblical paintings. Milton embraces the general effects, and handles the whole as easily as his Jehovah.

Let us quit superhuman and fanciful spectacles. A simple sunset equals them. Milton peoples it with solemn allegories and regal figures, and the sublime is born in the poet, as just before it was born from the subject:

"The sun, now fallen . . .
Arraying with reflected purple and gold
The clouds that on his western throne attend:
Now came still evening on, and twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied, for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;
She all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence was pleased: now glowed the firmament
With living sapphires: Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,

[60] "Paradise Lost," book vii. lines 210-292.

Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw." [61]

The changes of the light become here a religious procession of vague beings who fill the soul with veneration. So sanctified, the poet prays. Standing by the " inmost bower " of Adam and Eve, he says:

" Hail wedded love, mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety
In Paradise of all things common else!
By thee adulterous lust was driven from men
Among the bestial herds to range by thee,
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother, first were known." [62]

He justifies it by the example of saints and patriarchs. He immolates before it " the bought smile " and " court-armours, mix'd dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball, or serenate." We are a thousand miles from Shakespeare; and in this Protestant eulogy of the family tie, of lawful love, of " domestic sweets," of orderly piety and of home, we perceive a new literature and an altered time.

A strange great man, and a strange spectacle! He was born with the instinct of noble things; and this instinct, strengthened in him by solitary meditation, by accumulated knowledge, by stern logic, becomes changed into a body of maxims and beliefs which no temptation could dissolve, and no reverse shake. Thus fortified, he passes life as a combatant, as a poet, with courageous deeds and splendid dreams, heroic and rude, chimerical and impassioned, generous and calm, like every self-contained reasoner, like every enthusiast, insensible to experience and enamored of the beautiful. Thrown by the chance of a revolution into politics and theology, he demands for others the liberty which his powerful reason requires, and strikes at the public fetters which impede his personal energy. By the force of his intellect, he is more capable than anyone of accumulating science; by the force of his enthusiasm, he is more capable than any of experiencing hatred. Thus armed, he throws himself into controversy with all the clumsiness and barbarism of the time;

[61] " Paradise Lost," book iv. lines 591-609.

[62] Ibid. lines 750-757.

but this proud logic displays its arguments with a marvellous breadth, and sustains its images with an unwonted majesty: this lofty imagination, after having spread over his prose an array of magnificent figures, carries him into a torrent of passion even to the height of the sublime or excited ode—a sort of archangel's song of adoration or vengeance. The chance of a throne preserved, then re-established, led him, before the revolution took place, into pagan and moral poetry, after the revolution into Christian and moral verse. In both he aims at the sublime, and inspires admiration; because the sublime is the work of enthusiastic reason, and admiration is the enthusiasm of reason. In both, he arrives at his point by the accumulation of splendors, by the sustained fulness of poetic song, by the greatness of his allegories, the loftiness of his sentiments, the description of infinite objects and heroic emotions. In the first, a lyrist and a philosopher, with a wider poetic freedom, and the creator of a stronger poetic illusion, he produces almost perfect odes and choruses. In the second, an epic writer and a Protestant, enslaved by a strict theology, robbed of the style which makes the supernatural visible, deprived of the dramatic sensibility which creates varied and living souls, he accumulates cold dissertations, transforms man and God into orthodox and vulgar machines, and only regains his genius in endowing Satan with his republican soul, in multiplying grand landscapes and colossal apparitions, in consecrating his poetry to the praise of religion and duty.

Placed, as it happened, between two ages, he participates in their two characters, as a stream which, flowing between two different soils, is tinged by both their hues. A poet and a Protestant, he receives from the closing age the free poetic afflatus, and from the opening age the severe political religion. He employed the one in the service of the other, and displayed the old inspiration in new subjects. In his works we recognize two Englands: one impassioned for the beautiful, devoted to the emotions of an unshackled sensibility and the fancies of pure imagination, with no law but the natural feelings, and no religion but natural belief; willingly pagan, often immoral; such as it is exhibited by Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Shakespeare, Spenser, and the superb harvest of poets which covered the ground for a space of fifty years; the other fortified by a practical religion, void of metaphysical invention, altogether political,

worshipping rule, attached to measured, sensible, useful, narrow opinions, praising the virtues of the family, armed and stiffened by a rigid morality, driven into prose, raised to the highest degree of power, wealth, and liberty. In this sense, this style and these ideas are monuments of history; they concentrate, recall, or anticipate the past and the future; and in the limits of a single work are found the events and the feelings of several centuries and of a whole nation.

BOOK III.—THE CLASSIC AGE

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CHAPTER FIRST

THE RESTORATION

Part I.—The Roisterers

WHEN we alternately look at the works of the court painters of Charles I and Charles II, and pass from the noble portraits of Vandyke to the figures of Lely, the fall is sudden and great; we have left a palace, and we light on a bagnio.

Instead of the proud and dignified lords, at once cavaliers and courtiers, instead of those high-born yet simple ladies who look at the same time princesses and modest maidens, instead of that generous and heroic company, elegant and resplendent, in whom the spirit of the Renaissance yet survived, but who already displayed the refinement of the modern age, we are confronted by perilous and importunate courtesans, with an expression either vile or harsh, incapable of shame or of remorse.[1] Their plump, smooth hands toy fondlingly with dimpled fingers; ringlets of heavy hair fall on their bare shoulders; their swimming eyes languish voluptuously; an insipid smile hovers on their sensual lips. One is lifting a mass of dishevelled hair which streams over the curves of her rosy flesh; another falls down with languor, and uncloses a sleeve whose soft folds display the full whiteness of her arms. Nearly all are half draped; many of them seem to be just rising from their beds; the rumpled dressing-gown clings to the neck, and looks as though it were soiled by a night's debauch; the tumbled

[1] See especially the portraits of Lady Morland, Lady Williams, the Countess of Ossory, the Duchess of Cleveland, Lady Price, and many others.

under-garment slips down to the hips: their feet tread the bright and glossy silk. With bosoms uncovered, they are decked out in all the luxurious extravagance of prostitutes; diamond girdles, puffs of lace, the vulgar splendor of gilding, a superfluity of embroidered and rustling fabrics, enormous head-dresses, the curls and fringes of which, rolled up and sticking out, compel notice by the very height of their shameless magnificence. Folding curtains hang round them in the shape of an alcove, and the eyes penetrate through a vista into the recesses of a wide park, whose solitude will not ill serve the purpose of their pleasures.

Section I.—The Excesses of Puritanism

All this came by way of contrast; Puritanism had brought on an orgie, and fanatics had talked down virtue. For many years the gloomy English imagination, possessed by religious terrors, had desolated the life of men. Conscience had become disturbed at the thought of death and dark eternity; half-expressed doubts stealthily swarmed within like a bed of thorns, and the sick heart, starting at every motion, had ended by taking a disgust at all its pleasures, and abhorred all its natural instincts. Thus poisoned at its very beginning, the divine sentiment of justice became a mournful madness. Man, confessedly perverse and condemned, believed himself pent in a prison-house of perdition and vice, into which no effort and no chance could dart a ray of light, except a hand from above should come by free grace, to rend the sealed stone of this tomb. Men lived the life of the condemned, amid torments and anguish, oppressed by a gloomy despair, haunted by spectres. People would frequently imagine themselves at the point of death; Cromwell himself, according to Dr. Simcott, physician in Huntingdon, "had fancies about the Town Cross";[1] some would feel within them the motions of an evil spirit; one and all passed the night with their eyes glued to the tales of blood and the impassioned appeals of the Old Testament, listening to the threats and thunders of a terrible God, and renewing in their own hearts the ferocity of murderers and the exaltation of seers. Under such a strain reason gradually left them.

[1] Oliver Cromwell's "Letters and Speeches," edited by Carlyle, 1866, i. 39.—Tr.

They continually were seeking after the Lord, and found but a dream. After long hours of exhaustion, they labored under a warped and over-wrought imagination. Dazzling forms, unwonted ideas, sprang up on a sudden in their heated brain; these men were raised and penetrated by extraordinary emotions. So transformed, they knew themselves no longer; they did not ascribe to themselves these violent and sudden inspirations which were forced upon them, which compelled them to leave the beaten tracks, which had no connection one with another, which shook and enlightened them when least expected, without being able either to check or to govern them; they saw in them the agency of a supernatural power, and gave themselves up to it with the enthusiasm of madness and the stubbornness of faith.

To crown all, fanaticism had become an institution; the secretary had laid down all the steps of mental transfiguration, and reduced the encroachment of his dream to a theory: he set about methodically to drive out reason and enthrone ecstasy. George Fox wrote its history, Bunyan gave it its laws, Parliament presented an example of it, all the pulpits lauded its practice. Artisans, soldiers, women discussed it, mastered it, excited one another by the details of their experience and the publicity of their exaltations. A new life was inaugurated which had blighted and excluded the old. All secular tastes were suppressed, all sensual joys forbidden; the spiritual man alone remained standing upon the ruins of the past, and the heart, debarred from all its natural safety-valves, could only direct its views or aspirations towards a sinister Deity. The typical Puritan walked slowly along the streets, his eyes raised towards heaven, with elongated features, yellow and haggard, with closely cropped hair, clad in brown or black, unadorned, clothed only to cover his nakedness. If a man had round cheeks, he passed for lukewarm.[2] The whole body, the exterior, the very tone of voice, all must wear the sign of penitence and divine grace. A Puritan spoke slowly, with a solemn and somewhat nasal tone of voice, as if to destroy the vivacity of conversation and the melody of the natural voice. His speech stuffed with scriptural quotations, his style borrowed from the

[2] Colonel Hutchinson was at one time held in suspicion because he wore long hair and dressed well.

prophets, his name and the names of his children drawn from the Bible, bore witness that his thoughts were confined to the terrible world of the seers and ministers of divine vengeance. From within, the contagion spread outwards. The fears of conscience were converted into laws of the state. Personal asceticism grew into public tyranny. The Puritan proscribed pleasure as an enemy, for others as well as for himself. Parliament closed the gambling-houses and theatres, and had the actors whipped at the cart's tail; oaths were fined; the May-trees were cut down; the bears, whose fights amused the people, were put to death; the plaster of Puritan masons reduced nude statues to decency; the beautiful poetic festivals were forbidden. Fines and corporeal punishments shut out, even from children, games, dancing, bell-ringing, rejoicings, junketings, wrestling, the chase, all exercises and amusements which might profane the Sabbath. The ornaments, pictures, and statues in the churches were pulled down or mutilated. The only pleasure which they retained and permitted was the singing of psalms through the nose, the edification of long sermons, the excitement of acrimonious controversies, the harsh and sombre joy of a victory gained over the enemy of mankind, and of the tyranny exercised against the demon's supposed abettors. In Scotland, a colder and sterner land, intolerance reached the utmost limits of ferocity and pettiness, instituting a surveillance over the private life and home devotions of every member of a family, depriving Catholics of their children, imposing the abjuration of Popery under pain of perpetual imprisonment or death, dragging crowds of witches [3] to the stake.[4] It seemed

[3] 1648; thirty in one day. One of them confessed that she had been at a gathering of more than five hundred witches.

[4] In 1652, the kirk-session of Glasgow "brot boyes and servants before them, for breaking the sabbath, and other faults. They had clandestine censors, and gave money to some for this end."—Note 28, taken from Wodrow's "Analecta"; Buckle, "History of Civilization in England," 3 vols. 1867, iii. 208.

Even early in the eighteenth century, "the most popular divines" in Scotland affirmed that Satan "frequently appears clothed in a corporeal substance."—Ibid. iii. 233, note 76, taken from Memoirs of C. L. Lewes.

"No husband shall kiss his wife, and no mother shall kiss her child on the Sabbath day."—Note 135. Ibid. iii. 253; from Rev. C. J. Lyon's "St. Andrews," vol. i. 458, with regard to government of a colony. [It would have been satisfactory if Mr. Lyon had given his authority.]—Tr.

"(Sept. 22, 1649) The quhilk day the Sessioune caused mak this act, that ther sculd be no pypers at brydels," etc.—Ibid. iii. 258, note 153. In 1719, the Presbytery of Edinburgh indignantly declares: "Yea, some have arrived at that height of impiety, as not to be ashamed of washing in waters, and swimming in rivers upon the holy Sabbath."—Note 187. Ibid. iii. 266.

"I think David had never so sweet a time as then, when he was pursued as a partridge by his son Absalom."—Note 190. Gray's "Great and Precious Promises."

See the whole of Chapter iii. vol. iii. in which Buckle has described, by similar quotations, the condition of Scotland, chiefly in the seventeenth century.

as though a black cloud had weighed down the life of man, drowning all light, wiping out all beauty, extinguishing all joy, pierced here and there by the glitter of the sword and by the flickering of torches, beneath which one might perceive the indistinct forms of gloomy despots, of bilious sectarians, of silent victims.

Section II.—A Frenchman's View of the Manners of the Time

After the Restoration a deliverance ensued. Like a checked and choked-up stream, public opinion dashed with all its natural force and all its acquired momentum, into the bed from which it had been debarred. The outburst carried away the dams. The violent return to the senses drowned morality. Virtue had the semblance of Puritanism. Duty and fanaticism became mingled in common disrepute. In this great reaction, devotion and honesty, swept away together, left to mankind but the wreck and the mire. The more excellent parts of human nature disappeared; there remained but the animal, without bridle or guide, urged by his desires beyond justice and shame.

When we see these manners through the medium of a Hamilton or a Saint-Évremond, we can tolerate them. Their French varnish deceives us. Debauchery in a Frenchman is only half disgusting; with him, if the animal breaks loose, it is without abandoning itself to excess. The foundation is not, as with the Englishman, coarse and powerful. You may break the glittering ice which covers him, without bringing down upon yourself the swollen and muddy torrent that roars beneath his neighbor;[1] the stream which will issue from it will only have its petty dribblings, and will return quickly and of itself to its accustomed channel. The Frenchman is mild, naturally refined, little inclined for great or gross sensuality, liking a sober style of talk, easily armed against filthy manners by his delicacy and good taste. The Count de Grammont has too much wit to love an orgie. After all an orgie is not pleasant: the breaking of glasses, brawling, lewd talk, excess in eating and drinking—there is nothing in this very tempting to a rather delicate taste; the Frenchman, after Grammont's type, is born an epicurean, not a glutton or a drunkard. What he seeks is

[1] See, in Richardson, Swift, and Fielding, but particularly in Hogarth, the delineation of brutish debauchery.

amusement, not unrestrained joy or bestial pleasure. I know full well that he is not without reproach. I would not trust him with my purse; he forgets too readily the distinction between *meum* and *tuum;* above all, I would not trust him with my wife: he is not over-delicate; his escapades at the gambling-table and with women smack too much of the sharper and the briber. But I am wrong to use these big words in connection with him; they are too weighty; they crush so delicate and so pretty a specimen of humanity. These heavy habits of honor or shame can only be worn by serious-minded men, and Grammont takes nothing seriously, neither his fellow-men, nor himself, nor vice, nor virtue. To pass his time agreeably is his sole endeavor. "They had said good-by to dulness in the army," observed Hamilton, "as soon as he was there." That is his pride and his aim; he troubles himself, and cares for nothing beside. His valet robs him; another would have brought the rogue to the gallows; but the theft was clever, and he keeps his rascal. He left England forgetting to marry the girl he was betrothed to; he is caught at Dover; he returns and marries her: this was an amusing *contretemps;* he asks for nothing better. One day, being penniless, he fleeces the Count de Caméran at play. "Could Grammont, after the figure he had once cut, pack off like any common fellow? By no means; he is a man of feeling; he will maintain the honor of France." He covers his cheating at play with a joke; in reality, his notions of property are not over-clear. He regales Caméran with Caméran's own money; would Caméran have acted better or otherwise? What matter if his money be in Grammont's purse or his own? The main point is gained, since there is pleasure in getting the money, and there is pleasure in spending it. The hateful and the ignoble vanish from such a life. If he pays his court to princes, you may be sure it is not on his knees; so lively a soul is not weighed down by respect; his wit places him on a level with the greatest; under pretext of amusing the king, he tells him plain truths.[2] If he finds himself in London, surrounded by open debauchery, he does not plunge into it; he passes through on tiptoe, and so daintily that the mire does not stick to him. We do not recog-

[2] The king was playing at backgammon; a doubtful throw occurs: "Ah, here is Grammont, who'll decide for us; Grammont, come and decide." "Sire, you have lost." "What: you do not yet know." . . . "Ah, sire, if the throw had been merely doubtful, these gentlemen would not have failed to say you had won."

nize any longer in his anecdotes the anguish and the brutality which were really felt at that time; the narrative flows on quickly, raising a smile, then another, and another yet, so that the whole mind is brought by an adroit and easy progress to something like good humor. At table, Grammont will never stuff himself; at play, he will never grow violent; with his mistress, he will never give vent to coarse talk; in a duel, he will not hate his adversary. The wit of a Frenchman is like French wine; it makes men neither brutal, nor wicked, nor gloomy. Such is the spring of these pleasures: a supper will destroy neither delicacy, nor good nature, nor enjoyment. The libertine remains sociable, polite, obliging; his gayety culminates only in the gayety of others;[3] he is attentive to them as naturally as to himself; and in addition, he is ever on the alert and intelligent: repartees, flashes of brilliancy, witticisms, sparkle on his lips; he can think at table and in company, sometimes better than if alone or fasting. It is clear that with him debauchery does not extinguish the man; Grammont would say that it perfects him; that wit, the heart, the senses, only arrive at excellence and true enjoyment, amid the elegance and animation of a choice supper.

Section III.—Butler's Hudibras

It is quite the contrary in England. When we scratch the covering of an Englishman's morality, the brute appears in its violence and its deformity. One of the English statesmen said that with the French an unchained mob could be led by words of humanity and honor,[1] but that in England it was necessary, in order to appease them, to throw to them raw flesh. Insults, blood, orgie, that is the food on which the mob of noblemen, under Charles II, precipitated itself. All that excuses a carnival was absent; and, in particular, wit. Three years after the return of the king, Butler published his "Hudibras"; and with what *éclat* his contemporaries only could tell, while the echo of applause is kept up even to our own days. How low is the wit, with what awkwardness and dulness he dilutes his revengeful satire. Here and there lurks a happy picture, the remnant of a poetry which has just perished; but the whole

[3] Hamilton says of Grammont, "He sought out the unfortunate only to succor them."

[1] This saying sounds strange after the horrors of the Commune.—Tr.

work reminds one of a Scarron, as unworthy as the other, and more malignant. It is written, people say, on the model of Don Quixote; Hudibras is a Puritan knight, who goes about, like his antitype, redressing wrongs, and pocketing beatings. It would be truer to say that it resembles the wretched imitation of Avellaneda.[2] The short metre, well suited to buffoonery, hobbles along without rest and limpingly, floundering in the mud which it delights in, as foul and as dull as that of the "Enéide Travestie."[3] The description of Hudibras and his horse occupies the best part of a canto; forty lines are taken up by describing his beard, forty more by describing his breeches. Endless scholastic discussions, arguments as long as those of the Puritans, spread their wastes and briers over half the poem. No action, no simplicity, all is would-be satire and gross caricature; there is neither art, nor harmony nor good taste to be found in it; the Puritan style is converted into an absurd gibberish; and the engalled rancor, missing its aim by its mere excess, spoils the portrait it wishes to draw. Would you believe that such a writer gives himself airs, wishes to enliven us, pretends to be funny? What delicate raillery is there in this picture of Hudibras's beard!

> "His tawny beard was th' equal grace
> Both of his wisdom and his face;
> In cut and die so like a tile,
> A sudden view it would beguile:
> The upper part whereof was whey,
> The nether orange, mix'd with grey.
> This hairy meteor did denounce
> The fall of sceptres and of crowns:
> With grisly type did represent
> Declining age of Government,
> And tell with hieroglyphic spade
> Its own grave and the state's were made."[4]

Butler is so well satisfied with his insipid fun, that he prolongs it for a good many lines:

> "Like Samson's heart-breakers, it grew
> In time to make a nation rue;

[2] A Spanish author, who continued and imitated Cervantes's "Don Quixote."

[3] A work by Scarron. "Hudibras," edited Z. Grey, 1801, 2 vols. i. canto i. line 289, says also:

> "For as Æneas bore his sire
> Upon his shoulders through the fire,
> Our knight did bear no less a pack
> Of his own buttocks on his back."

[4] "Hudibras," part i. canto i. lines 241-250.

Tho' it contributed its own fall,
To wait upon the public downfall. . . .
'Twas bound to suffer persecution
And martyrdom with resolution;
T' oppose itself against the hate
And vengeance of the incens'd state,
In whose defiance it was worn,
Still ready to be pull'd and torn,
With red-hot irons to be tortur'd,
Revil'd, and spit upon, and martyr'd.
Maugre all which, 'twas to stand fast
As long as monarchy should last;
But when the state should hap to reel,
'Twas to submit to fatal steel,
And fall, as it was consecrate,
A sacrifice to fall of state,
Whose thread of life the fatal sisters
Did twist together with its whiskers,
And twine so close, that time should never,
In life or death, their fortunes sever;
But with his rusty sickle mow
Both down together at a blow." [5]

The nonsense increases as we go on. Could anyone have taken pleasure in humor such as this?

" This sword a dagger had, his page,
That was but little for his age;
And therefore waited on him so
As dwarfs upon knights-errant do. . . .
When it had stabb'd, or broke a head,
It would scrape trenchers, or chip bread. . . .
'Twould make clean shoes, and in the earth
Set leeks and onions, and so forth." [6]

Everything becomes trivial; if any beauty presents itself, it is spoiled by burlesque. To read those long details of the kitchen, those servile and crude jokes, people might fancy themselves in the company of a common buffoon in the market-place; it is the talk of the quacks on the bridges, adapting their imagination and language to the manners of the beer-shop and the hovel. There is filth to be met with there; indeed, the rabble will laugh when the mountebank alludes to the disgusting acts of private life.[7] Such is the grotesque stuff in which the cour-

[5] " Hudibras," part i. canto i. lines 253-280.
[6] Ibid. lines 375-386.
[7] " Quoth Hudibras, I smell a rat.
Ralpho, thou dost prevaricate;

tiers of the Restoration delighted; their spite and their coarseness took a pleasure in the spectacle of these bawling puppets; even now, after two centuries, we hear the ribald laughter of this audience of lackeys.

Section IV.—Morals of the Court

Charles II, when at his meals, ostentatiously drew Grammont's attention to the fact that his officers served him on their knees. They were in the right; it was their fit attitude. Lord Chancellor Clarendon, one of the most honored and honest men of the Court, learns suddenly and in full council that his daughter Anne is *enceinte* by the Duke of York, and that the Duke, the king's brother, has promised her marriage. Listen to the words of this tender father; he has himself taken care to hand them down:

"The Chancellor broke out into a very immoderate passion against the wickedness of his daughter, and said with all imaginable earnestness, 'that as soon as he came home, he would turn her (his daughter) out of his house as a strumpet to shift for herself, and would never see her again.'" [1]

Observe that this great man had received the news from the king unprepared, and that he made use of these fatherly expressions on the spur of the moment. He added, "that he had much rather his daughter should be the duke's whore than his wife." Is that not heroical? But let Clarendon speak for himself. Only such a true monarchical heart can surpass itself:

"He was ready to give a positive judgment, in which he hoped their lordships would concur with him; that the king should immediately cause the woman to be sent to the Tower, and to be cast into a dungeon under so strict a guard, that no person living should be admitted to come to her; and that an act of Parliament should be immediately passed for the cutting off her head, to which he would not only give his consent, but would very willingly be the first man that should propose it." [2]

For though the thesis which thou lay'st
Be true ad amussim as thou say'st
(For that bear-baiting should appear
Jure divino lawfuller
Than Synods are, thou do'st deny,
Totidem verbis; so do I),
Yet there is fallacy in this;
For if by sly homœosis,
Tussis pro crepitu, an art
. . . . . .
Thou wouldst sophistically imply,
Both are unlawful, I deny."
Part i. canto i. lines 821-834.

[1] "The Life of Clarendon," edited by himself, new ed. 1827, 3 vols. i. 378.
[2] Ibid. i. 379.

What Roman virtue! Afraid of not being believed, he insists whoever knew the man, will believe that all this came from the very bottom of his heart. He is not yet satisfied; he repeats his advice; he addresses to the king different conclusive reasonings, in order that they might cut off the head of his daughter:

"I had rather submit and bear it (this disgrace) with all humility, than that it should be repaired by making her his wife, the thought whereof I do so much abominate, that I had much rather see her dead, with all the infamy that is due to her presumption." [3]

In this manner, a man, who is in difficulty, can keep his salary and his Chancellor's robes. Sir Charles Berkley, captain of the Duke of York's guards, did better still; he solemnly swore "that he had lain with the young lady," and declared himself ready to marry her "for the sake of the duke, though he knew well the familiarity the duke had with her." Then, shortly afterwards, he confessed that he had lied, but with a good intention, in all honor, in order to save the royal family from such a *mésalliance*. This admirable self-sacrifice was rewarded; he soon had a pension from the privy purse, and was created Earl of Falmouth. From the first, the baseness of the public corporations rivalled that of individuals. The House of Commons, but recently master of the country, still full of Presbyterians, rebels, and conquerors, voted "that neither themselves nor the people of England could be freed from the horrid guilt of the late unnatural rebellion, or from the punishment which that guilt merited, unless they formally availed themselves of his Majesty's grace and pardon, as set forth in the declaration of Breda." Then all these heroes went in a body and threw themselves with contrition at the sacred feet of their monarch. In this universal prostration it seemed that no one had any courage left. The king became the hireling of Louis XIV, and sold his country for a large pension. Ministers, members of Parliament, ambassadors, all received French money. The contagion spread even to patriots, to men noted for their purity, to martyrs. Lord William Russell intrigued with Versailles; Algernon Sidney accepted 500 guineas. They had not discrimination enough to retain a show of spirit; they had not spirit enough to retain a show of honor.[4]

[3] "The Life of Clarendon," edited by himself, new ed. 1827, 3 vols. i. 380.

[4] "Mr. Evelyn tells me of several of the menial servants of the Court lacking bread, that have not received a

In men thus laid bare, the first thing that strikes you is the bloodthirsty instinct of brute beasts. Sir John Coventry, a member of Parliament, let some word escape him, which was construed into a reproach of the royal amours. His friend, the Duke of Monmouth, contrived that he should be treacherously assaulted under the king's command, by respectable men devoted to his service, who slit his nose to the bone. A vile wretch of the name of Blood tried to assassinate the Duke of Ormond, and to stab the keeper of the Tower, in order to steal the crown jewels. Charles II, considering that this was an interesting and distinguished man of his kind, pardoned him, gave him an estate in Ireland, and admitted him to his presence, side by side with the Duke of Ormond, so that Blood became a sort of hero, and was received in good society. After such splendid examples, men dared everything. The Duke of Buckingham, a lover of the Countess of Shrewsbury, slew the Earl in a duel; the Countess, disguised as a page, held Buckingham's horse, while she embraced him, covered as he was with her husband's blood; and the murderer and adulteress returned publicly, and as triumphantly, to the house of the dead man. We can no longer wonder at hearing Count Königsmark describe as a "peccadillo" an assassination which he had committed by waylaying his victim. I transcribe a duel out of Pepys, to give a notion of the manners of these bloodthirsty cut throats. Sir H. Bellassis and Tom Porter, the greatest friends in the world, were talking together:

"and Sir H. Bellassis talked a little louder than ordinary to Tom Porter, giving him some advice. Some of the company standing by said, 'What! are they quarrelling, that they talk so high?' Sir H. Bellassis, hearing it, said, 'No!' says he: 'I would have you know I never quarrel, but I strike: and take that as a rule of mine!' 'How?' says Tom Porter, 'strike! I would I could see the man in England that durst give me a blow!' with that Sir H. Bellassis did give him a box of the eare; and so they were going to fight there, but were hindered. . . . Tom Porter, being informed that Sir H. Bellassis's coach was coming,

farthing wages since the King's coming in."—Pepys's Diary, ed. Lord Braybrooke, 3d ed. 1848, 5 vols. iv. April 26, 1667.

"Mr. Povy says that to this day the King do follow the women as much as he ever did; that the Duke of York . . . hath come out of his wife's bed, and gone to others laid in bed for him; . . . that the family (of the Duke) is in horrible disorder by being in debt by spending above £ 60,000 per annum, when he hath not £40,000" (Ibid. iv. June 23, 1667).

"It is certain that, as it now is, the seamen of England, in my conscience, would, if they could, go over and serve the king of France or Holland rather than us" (Ibid. iv. June 25, 1667).

went down out of the coffee house where he stand for the tidings, and stopped the coach, and bade Sir H. Bellassis come out. 'Why,' says H. Bellassis, 'you will not hurt me coming out, will you?' 'No,' says Tom Porter. So out he went, and both drew. . . . They wounded one another, and Sir H. Bellassis so much that it is feared he will die"—[1]

which he did ten days after.

Bull-dogs like these took no pity on their enemies. The Restoration opened with a butchery. The Lords conducted the trials of the republicans with a shamelessness of cruelty and an excess of rancor that were extraordinary. A sheriff struggled with Sir Harry Vane on the scaffold, rummaging his pockets, and taking from him a paper which he attempted to read. During the trial of Major-General Harrison, the hangman was placed by his side, in a black dress, with a rope in his hand; they sought to give him a full enjoyment of the foretaste of death. He was cut down alive from the gibbet, and disembowelled, he saw his entrails cast into the fire; he was then quartered, and his still beating heart was torn out and shown to the people. The cavaliers gathered round for amusement. Here and there one of them would do worse even than this. Colonel Turner, seeing them quarter John Coke, the lawyer, told the sheriff's men to bring Hugh Peters, another of the condemned, nearer; the executioner came up, and rubbing his bloody hands, asked the unfortunate man if the work pleased him. The rotting bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw were dug up in the night, and their heads fixed on poles over Westminster Hall. Ladies went to see these disgusting sights; the good Evelyn applauded them; the courtiers made songs on them. These people were fallen so low, that they did not even turn sick at it. Sight and smell no longer aided humanity by producing repugnance; their senses were as dead as their hearts.

From carnage they threw themselves into debauchery. You should read the life of the Earl of Rochester, a courtier and a poet, who was the hero of the time. His manners were those of a lawless and wretched mountebank; his delight was to haunt the stews, to debauch women, to write filthy songs and lewd pamphlets; he spent his time between gossiping with the maids of honor, broils with men of letters, the receiving of insults, the

[1] Pepys's Diary, vol. iv. July 29, 1667.

giving of blows. By way of playing the gallant, he eloped with his wife before he married her. Out of a spirit of bravado, he declined fighting a duel, and gained the name of a coward. For five years together he was said to be drunk. The spirit within him failing of a worthy outlet, plunged him into adventures more befitting a clown. Once with the Duke of Buckingham he rented an inn on the Newmarket road, and turned innkeeper, supplying the husbands with drink and defiling their wives. He introduced himself, disguised as an old woman, into the house of a miser, robbed him of his wife, and passed her on to Buckingham. The husband hanged himself; they made very merry over the affair. At another time he disguised himself as a chairman, then as a beggar, and paid court to the gutter-girls. He ended by turning a quack astrologer, and vender of drugs for procuring abortion, in the suburbs. It was the licentiousness of a fervid imagination, which fouled itself as another would have adorned it, which forced its way into lewdness and folly as another would have done into sense and beauty. What can come of love in hands like these? We cannot copy even the titles of his poems; they were written only for the haunts of vice. Stendhal said that love is like a dried up bough cast into a mine; the crystals cover it, spread out into filagree work, and end by converting the worthless stick into a sparkling tuft of the purest diamonds. Rochester begins by depriving love of all its adornment, and to make sure of grasping it, converts it into a stick. Every refined sentiment, every fancy; the enchantment, the serene, sublime glow which transforms in a moment this wretched world of ours; the illusion which, uniting all the powers of our being, shows us perfection in a finite creature, and eternal bliss in a transient emotion—all has vanished; there remain but satiated appetites and palled senses. The worst of it is, that he writes without spirit, and methodically enough. He has no natural ardor, no picturesque sensuality; his satires prove him a disciple of Boileau. Nothing is more disgusting than obscenity in cold blood. We can endure the obscene works of Giulio Romano and his Venetian voluptuousness, because in them genius sets off sensuality, and the loveliness of the splendid colored draperies transforms an orgie into a work of art. We pardon Rabelais, when we have entered into the deep current of manly joy and vigor, with which his feasts abound.

We can hold our nose and have done with it, while we follow with admiration, and even sympathy, the torrent of ideas and fancies which flows through his mire. But to see a man trying to be elegant and remaining obscene, endeavoring to paint the sentiments of a navvy in the language of a man of the world, who tries to find a suitable metaphor for every kind of filth, who plays the blackguard studiously and deliberately, who, excused neither by genuine feeling, nor the glow of fancy, nor knowledge, nor genius, degrades a good style of writing to such work —it is like a rascal who sets himself to sully a set of gems in a gutter. The end of all is but disgust and illness. While La Fontaine continues to the last day capable of tenderness and happiness, this man at the age of thirty insults the weaker sex with spiteful malignity:

"When she is young, she whores herself for sport;
And when she's old, she bawds for her support. . . .
She is a snare, a shamble, and a stews;
Her meat and sauce she does for lechery chuse,
And does in laziness delight the more,
Because by that she is provoked to whore.
Ungrateful, treacherous, enviously inclined,
Wild beasts are tamed, floods easier far confined,
Than is her stubborn and rebellious mind. . . .
Her temper so extravagant we find,
She hates, or is impertinently kind.
Would she be grave, she then looks like a devil,
And like a fool or whore, when she be civil. . . .
Contentious, wicked, and not fit to trust,
And covetous to spend it on her lust." [6]

What a confession is such a judgment! what an abstract of life. You see the roisterer stupefied at the end of his career, dried up like a mummy, eaten away by ulcers. Amid the choruses, the crude satires, the remembrance of plans miscarried, the sullied enjoyments which are heaped up in his wearied brain as in a sink, the fear of damnation is fermenting; he dies a devotee at the age of thirty-three.

At the head of all, the king sets the example. This "old goat," as the courtiers call him, imagines himself a man of gayety and elegance. What gayety! what elegance! French manners do not suit men beyond the Channel. When they are

[6] Rochester's Works, edited by Saint-Évremond.

Catholics, they fall into narrow superstition; when epicureans, into gross debauchery; when courtiers, into base servility; when sceptics, into vulgar atheism. The court of England could only imitate French furniture and dress. The regular and decent exterior which public taste maintained as Versailles was here dispensed with as troublesome. Charles and his brother, in their state dress, would set off running as in a carnival. On the day when the Dutch fleet burned the English ships in the Thames, the king supped with the Duchess of Monmouth, and amused himself by chasing a moth. In council, while business was being transacted, he would be playing with his dog. Rochester and Buckingham insulted him by insolent repartees or dissolute epigrams; he would fly into a passion and suffer them to go on. He quarrelled with his mistress in public; she called him an idiot, and he called her a jade. He would leave her in the morning, "so that the very sentrys speak of it." [7] He suffered her to play him false before the eyes of all; at one time she received a couple of actors, one of whom was a mountebank. If need were, she would use abusive language to him. "The King hath declared that he did not get the child of which she is conceived at this time." But she told him, " . . . ! but you shall own it." [8] Whereupon he did acknowledge the child, and took to himself a couple of actresses for consolation. When his new wife, Catherine of Braganza, arrived, he drove away her attendants, used coarse language to her, that he might force on her the familiarities of his mistress, and finished by degrading her to a friendship such as this. The good Pepys, notwithstanding his loyal feelings, ends by saying, having heard the king and the duke talk, and seeing and observing their manner of discourse. "God forgive me! though I admire them with all the duty possible, yet the more a man considers and observes them, the less he finds of difference between them and other men, though, blessed be God! they are both princes of great nobleness and spirits." [9] He heard that, on a certain day, the king was so besotted with Mrs. Stewart that he gets "into corners, and will be with her half an hour together kissing her to the observation of all the world." [10] Another day, Captain Ferrers told him "how, at a ball at Court,

[7] Pepys's Diary, ii. January 1, 1662-1663.
[8] Ibid. iv. July 30, 1667.
[9] Ibid. iii. July 26, 1665.
[10] Ibid. ii. November 9, 1663.

a child was dropped by one of the ladies in dancing." They took it off on a handkerchief, "and the King had it in his closet a week after, and did dissect it, making great sport if it." [11] These ghastly freaks and these lewd events make us shudder. The courtiers went with the stream. Miss Jennings, who became Duchess of Tyrconnel, disguised herself one day as an orange girl, and cried her wares in the street.[12] Pepys recounts festivities in which lords and ladies smeared one another's faces with candle-grease and soot, "till most of us were like devils." It was the fashion to swear, to relate scandalous adventures, to get drunk, to prate against the preachers and Scripture, to gamble. Lady Castlemaine in one night lost £25,000. The Duke of St. Albans, a blind man, eighty years old, went to the gambling-house with an attendant at his side to tell him the cards. Sedley and Buckhurst stripped nearly naked, and ran through the streets after midnight. Another, in the open day, stood naked at the window to address the people. I let Grammont keep to himself his accounts of the maids of honor brought to bed, and of unnatural lusts. We must either exhibit or conceal them, and I have not the courage lightly to insinuate them, after his fashion. I end by a quotation from Pepys, which will serve for example: "Here I first understood by their talk the meaning of company that lately were called Ballers; Harris telling how it was by a meeting of some young blades, where he was among them, and my Lady Bennet and her ladies; and their dancing naked, and all the roguish things in the world." [13] The marvellous thing is, that this fair is not even gay; these people were misanthropic, and became morose; they quote the gloomy Hobbes, and he is their master. In fact, the philosophy of Hobbes shall give us the last word and the last characteristics of this society.

Section V.—Method and Style of Hobbes

Hobbes was one of those powerful, limited, and, as they are called, positive minds, so common in England, of the school of Swift and Bentham, efficacious and remorseless as an iron machine. Hence we find in him a method and style of surprising

[11] Pepys's Diary, ii. February 8, 17, 1662-3.

[12] Ibid. February 21, 1664-1665.

[13] The author has inadvertently confounded "my Lady Bennet" with the Countess of Arlington. See Pepys's Diary, iv. May 30, 1668, footnote.—Tr.

dryness and vigor, most adapted to build up and pull down; hence a philosophy which, by the audacity of its teaching, has placed in an undying light one of the indestructible phases of the human mind. In every object, every event, there is some primitive and constant fact, which forms, as it were, the nucleus around which group themselves the various developments which complete it. The positive mind swoops down immediately upon this nucleus, crushes the brilliant growth which covers it; disperses, annihilates it; then, concentrating upon it the full force of its violent grasp, loosens it, raises it up, shapes it, and lifts it into a conspicuous position, from whence it may henceforth shine out to all men and for all time like a crystal. All ornament, all emotions, are excluded from the style of Hobbes; it is a mere aggregate of arguments and concise facts in a small space, united together by deduction, as by iron bands. There are no tints, no fine or unusual word. He makes use only of words most familiar to common and lasting usage; there are not a dozen employed by him which, during two hundred years, have grown obsolete; he pierces to the root of all sensation, removes the transient and brilliant externals, narrows the solid portion which is the permanent subject-matter of all thought, and the proper object of common intelligence. He curtails throughout in order to strengthen; he attains solidity, by suppression. Of all the bonds which connect ideas, he retains but one, and that the most stable; his style is only a continuous chain of reasoning of the most stubborn description, wholly made up of additions and subtractions, reduced to a combination of certain simple ideas, which added on to or diminishing from one another, make up, under various names, the totals or differences, of which we are forever either studying the formation or unravelling the elements. He pursued beforehand the method of Condillac, beginning with tracing to the original fact, palpably and clearly, so as to pursue step by step the filiation and parentage of the ideas of which this primary fact is the stock, in such a manner that the reader conducted from total to total, may at any moment test the exactness of his operation, and verify the truth of his results. Such a logical system cuts across the grain of prejudice with a mechanical stiffness and boldness. Hobbes clears science of scholastic words and theories. He laughs down quiddities, he does away with rational

and intelligible classifications, he rejects the authority of references.[1] He cuts, as with a surgeon's knife, at the heart of the most living creeds. He denies the authenticity of the books of Moses, Joshua, and the like. He declares that no argument proves the divinity of Scripture, and that, in order to believe it, every man requires a supernatural and personal revelation. He upsets in half a dozen words the authority of this and every other revelation.[2] He reduces man to a mere body, the soul to a function, God, to an unknown existence. His phrases read like equations or mathematical results. In fact, it is from mathematics[3] that he derives the idea of all science. He would reconstitute moral science on the same basis. He assigns to it this foundation when he lays down that sensation is an internal movement caused by an external shock; desire, an internal movement toward an external object; and he builds upon these two notions the whole system of morals. Again, he assigns to morals a mathematical method, when he distinguishes, like the geometrician, between two simple ideas, which he transforms by degrees into two more complex; and when on the basis of sensation and desire he constructs the passions, the rights, and institutions of man, just as the geometrician out of straight lines and curves constructs all the varieties of figure. To morals he gives a mathematical aspect, by mapping out the incomplete and rigid construction of human life, like the network of imaginary forms which geometricians have conceived. For the first time there was discernible in him, as in Descartes, but exaggerated and standing out more conspicuously, that species of intellect which produced the classic age in Europe: not the independence of inspiration and genius which marked the Renaissance; not the mature experimental methods and concep-

[1] "Though I reverence those men of ancient times that either have written truth perspicuously, or set it in a better way to find it out ourselves, yet to the antiquity itself, I think nothing due; for if we reverence the age, the present is the oldest."—Hobbes's Works, Molesworth, 11 vols. 8vo, 1839-45, iii. 712.

[2] "To say he hath spoken to him in a dream, is no more than to say he dreamed that God spake to him. . . . To say he hath seen a vision or heard a voice, is to say that he has dreamed between sleeping and waking. . . . To say he speaks by supernatural inspiration, is to say he finds an ardent desire to speak, or some strong opinion of himself for which he can allege no sufficient and natural reason."—Ibid. iii. 361-2.

[3] "From the principle parts of Nature, Reason, and Passion, have proceeded two kinds of learning, mathematical and dogmatical. The former is free from controversy and dispute, because it consisteth in comparing figure and motion only, in which things truth and the interest of men oppose not each other. But in the other there is nothing undisputable, because it compares men, and meddles with their right and profit."—Ibid. 11 vols. 8vo, 1839-45, i. Epis. ded.

tions of aggregates which distinguish the present age, but the independence of argumentative reasoning, which, dispensing with the imagination, liberating itself from tradition, badly practising experience, acknowledges its queen in logic, its model in mathematics, its instrument in ratiocination, its audience in polished society, its employment in average truth, its subject-matter in abstract humanity, its formula in ideology, and in the French Revolution at once its glory and its condemnation, its triumph and its close.

But whereas Descartes, in the midst of a purified society and religion, noble and calm, enthroned intelligence and elevated man, Hobbes, in the midst of an overthrown society and a religion run mad, degraded man and enthroned matter. Through disgust of Puritanism, the courtiers reduced human existence to an animal licentiousness; through disgust of Puritanism, Hobbes reduced human nature to its merely animal aspect. The courtiers were practically atheists and brutish, as he was atheistic and brutish in the province of speculation. They had established the fashion of instinct and egotism; he wrote the philosophy of egotism and instinct. They had wiped out from their hearts all refined and noble sentiments; he wiped out from the heart all noble and refined sentiments. He arranged their manners into a theory, gave them the manual of their conduct, wrote down beforehand the maxims which they were to reduce to practice.[4] With him, as with them, "the greatest good is the preservation of life and limb; the greatest evil is death, especially with pain." Other goods and other evils are only the means of these. None seek or wish for anything but that which is pleasurable. "No man gives except for a personal advantage." Why are friendships good things? "Because they are useful; friends serve for defence and otherwise." Why do we pity one another? "Because we imagine that a similar misfortune may befall ourselves." Why is it noble to pardon him who asks it? "Because thus one proves confidence in self." Such is the background of the human heart. Consider now what becomes of the most precious flowers in these blighting hands. "Music, painting, poetry, are agreeable as imitations which recall the past, because if the past was good, it is agreeable in its imitation as a good thing; but if it was bad, it is agreeable in its imitation

[4] His chief works were written between 1646 and 1655.

as being past." To this gross mechanism he reduces the fine arts; it was perceptible in his attempt to translate the Iliad. In his sight, philosophy is a thing of like kind. "Wisdom is serviceable, because it has in it some kind of protection; if it is desirable in itself, it is because it is pleasant." Thus there is no dignity in knowledge. It is a pastime or an assistance; good, as a servant or a puppet is a good thing. Money being more serviceable, is worth more. "Not he who is wise is rich, as the Stoics say; but, on the contrary, he who is rich is wise." [5] As to religion, it is but "the fear of an invisible power, whether this be a figment, or adopted from history by general consent." [6] Indeed, this was true for a Rochester or a Charles II; cowards or bullies, superstitious or blasphemers, they conceived of nothing beyond. Neither is there any natural right. "Before men were bound by contract one with another, each had the right to do what he would against whom he would." Nor any natural friendship. "All association is for the cause of advantage or of glory; that is, for love of one's self, not of one's associates. The origin of great and durable associations is not mutual well-wishing but mutual fear. The desire of injuring is innate in all. Man is to man a wolf. . . . Warfare was the natural condition of men before societies were formed; and this not incidentally, but of all against all: and this war is of its own nature eternal." [7] Sectarian violence let loose, the conflict of ambitions, the fall of governments, the overflow of soured imaginations and malevolent passions, had raised up this idea of society and of mankind. One and all, philosophers and people, yearned for monarchy and repose. Hobbes, an inexorable logician, would

[5] Nemo dat nisi respiciens ad bonum sibi.

Amicitiæ bonæ, nempe utiles. Nam amicitiæ cum ad multa alia, tum ad præsidium conferunt.

Sapientia utile. Nam præsidium in se habet nonnullum. Etiam appetibile est per se, id est jucundum. Item pulchrum, quia acquisitu difficilis.

Non enim qui sapiens est, ut dixere stoici, dives est sed contra qui dives est sapiens est dicendus est.

Ignoscere veniam petenti pulchrum. Nam indicium fiduciæ sui.

Imitatio jucundum: revocat enim præterita. Præterita autem si bona fuerint, jucunda sunt repræsentata, quia bona; si mala, quia præterita. Jucunda igitur musica, poesis pictura.—Hobbes's "Opera Latina," Molesworth, vol. ii. 92-103.

[6] Metus potentiarum invisibilium, sive fictæ illæ sint, sive ab historiis acceptæ sint publice, religio est si publice acceptæ non sint, superstitio.—Ibid. iii. 45.

[7] Omnis igitur societas vel commodi causa vel gloriæ, hoc est, sui, non sociorum amore contrahitur.—Ibid. ii. 161.

Statuendum igitur est, originem magnarum et diuturnarum societatum non a mutua hominum benevolentia, sed a mutuo metu exstitisse.—Ibid. ii. 161.

Voluntas lædendi omnibus quidem inest in statu naturæ.—Ibid. ii. 162.

Status hominum naturalis antequam in societatem coiretur bellum fuerit; neque hoc simpliciter, sed bellum omnium in omnes.—Ibid. ii. 166.

Bellum sua natura sempiternum.—See 166, line 16.

have it absolute; repression would thus be more stern, peace more lasting. The sovereign should be unopposed. Whatsoever he might do against a subject, under whatever pretext, would not be injustice. He ought to decide upon the canonical books. He was pope, and more than pope. Were he to command it, his subjects should renounce Christ, at least with their mouth; the original contract has given up to him, without any reservation, all responsibility of external actions; at least, according to this view, the sectarian will no longer have the pretext of his conscience in harassing the state. To such extremities had the intense weariness and horror of civil war driven a narrow but logical intellect. Upon the secure den in which he had with every effort imprisoned and confined the evil beast of prey, he laid as a final weight, in order that he might perpetuate the captivity of humanity, the whole philosophy and theory not simply of man, but of the remainder of the universe. He reduced judgment to the "combination of two terms," ideas to conditions of the brain, sensations to motions of the body, general laws to simple words, all substance to corporeality, all science to the knowledge of sensible bodies, the human being to a body capable of motion given or received; so that man, recognizing himself and nature only under this despised form, and degraded in his conception of himself and of the world, might bow beneath the burden of a necessary authority, and submit in the end to the yoke which his rebellious nature rejects, yet is forced to tolerate.[8] Such, in brief, is the aim which this spectacle of the English Restoration suggests. Men deserved then this treatment, because they gave birth to this philosophy; they were represented on the stage as they had proved themselves to be in theory and in manners.

[8] Corpus et substantia idem significant, et proinde vox composita substantia incorporea est insignificans æque ac si quis diceret corpus incorporeum.—Hobbes's "Opera Latina," Molesworth, vol. iii. 281.

Quidquid imaginamur finitum est. Nulla ergo est idea neque conceptus qui oriri potest a voce hac, infinitum.—Ibid. iii. 20.

Recidit itaque ratiocinatio omnis ad duas operationes animi, additionem et substractionem.—Ibid. i. 3.

Nomina signa sunt non rerum sed cogitationem.—Ibid. i. 15.

Veritas enim in dicto non in re consistit.—Ibid. i. 31.

Sensio igitur in sentiente nihil aliud esse potest præter motum partium aliquarum intus in sentiente existentium, quæ partes motæ organorum quibus sentimus partes sunt.—Ibid. i. 317.

Section VI.—The Theatre

When the theatres, which Parliament had closed, were reopened, the change of public taste was soon manifested. Shirley, the last of the grand old school, wrote and lived no longer. Waller, Buckingham, and Dryden were compelled to dish up the plays of Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and to adapt them to the modern style. Pepys, who went to see "Midsummer Night's Dream," declared that he would never go there again; "for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life." [1] Comedy was transformed; the fact was, that the public was transformed.

What an audience was that of Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher! What youthful and delightful souls! In this evil-smelling room in which it was necessary to burn juniper, before that miserable half-lighted stage, before decorations worthy of an alehouse, with men playing the women's parts, illusion enchained them. They scarcely troubled themselves about probabilities; they could be carried in an instant over forest and ocean, from clime to clime, across twenty years of time, through ten battles and all the hurry of adventure. They did not care to be always laughing; comedy, after a burst of buffoonery, resumed its serious or tender tone. They came less to be amused than to muse. In these fresh minds, amidst a woof of passions and dreams, there were hidden passions and brilliant dreams whose imprisoned swarm buzzed indistinctly, waiting for the poet to come and lay bare to them the novelty and the splendor of heaven. Landscapes revealed by a lightning flash, the gray mane of a long and overhanging billow, a wet forest nook where the deer raise their startled heads, the sudden smile and purpling cheek of a young girl in love, the sublime and various flight of all delicate sentiments, a cloak of ecstatic and romantic passion over all—these were the sights and feelings which they came to seek. They raised themselves without any assistance to the summit of the world of ideas; they desired to contemplate extreme generosity, absolute love; they were not astonished at the sight of fairy-land; they entered without an effort into the region of poetical transformation, whose light was necessary to

[1] Pepys's Diary, ii. September 29, 1662.

their eyes. They took in at a glance its excesses and its caprices; they needed no preparation; they followed its digressions, its whimsicalities, the crowding of its abundant creations, the sudden prodigality of its high coloring, as a musician follows a symphony. They were in that transient and strained condition in which the imagination, adult and pure, laden with desire, curiosity, force develops man all at once, and in that man the most exalted and exquisite feelings.

The roisterers took the place of these. They were rich, they had tried to deck themselves with the polish of Frenchmen; they added to the stage movable decorations, music, lights, probability, comfort, every external aid; but they wanted heart. Imagine those foppish and half-intoxicated men, who saw in love nothing beyond desire, and in man nothing beyond sensuality; Rochester in the place of Mercutio. What part of his soul could comprehend poesy and fancy? The comedy of romance was altogether beyond his reach; he could only seize the actual world, and of this world but the palpable and gross externals. Give him an exact picture of ordinary life, commonplace and probable occurrences, literal imitations of what he himself was and did; lay the scene in London, in the current year; copy his coarse words, his brutal jokes, his conversation with the orange girls, his rendezvous in the park, his attempts at French dissertation. Let him recognize himself, let him find again the people and the manners he had just left behind him in the tavern or the antechamber; let the theatre and the street reproduce one another. Comedy will give him the same entertainment as real life; he will wallow equally well there in vulgarity and lewdness; to be present there will demand neither imagination nor wit; eyes and memory are the only requisites. This exact imitation will amuse him and instruct him at the same time. Filthy words will make him laugh through sympathy; shameless imagery will divert him by appealing to his recollections. The author, too, will take care to arouse him by his plot, which generally has the deceiving of a father or a husband for its subject. The fine gentlemen agree with the author in siding with the gallant; they follow his fortunes with interest, and fancy that they themselves have the same success with the fair. Add to this women debauched, and willing to be debauched; and it is manifest how these provocations, these manners of prostitutes, that inter-

change of exchanges and surprises, that carnival of rendezvous and suppers, the impudence of the scenes only stopping short of physical demonstration, those songs with their double meaning, that coarse slang shouted loudly and replied to amidst the *tableaux vivants*, all that stage-imitation of orgie, must have stirred up the innermost feelings of the habitual practisers of intrigue. And what is more, the theatre gave its sanction to their manners. By representing nothing but vice, it authorized their vices. Authors laid it down as a rule, that all women were impudent hussies, and that all men were brutes. Debauchery in their hands became a matter of course, nay more, a matter of good taste; they profess it. Rochester and Charles II could quit the theatre highly edified; more convinced than they were before that virtue was only a pretence, the pretence of clever rascals who wanted to sell themselves dear.

Section VII.—Dryden and the Drama

Dryden, who was amongst the first [1] to adopt this view of the matter, did not adopt it heartily. A kind of hazy mist, the relic of the former age, still floated over his plays. His wealthy imagination half bound him to the comedy of romance. At one time he adapted Milton's "Paradise," Shakespeare's "Tempest," and "Troilus and Cressida." Another time he imitated, in "Love in a Nunnery," in "Marriage à la Mode," in "The Mock Astrologer," the imbroglios and surprises of the Spanish stage. Sometimes he displays the sparkling images and lofty metaphors of the older national poets, sometimes the affected figures of speech and cavilling wit of Calderon and Lope de Vega. He mingles the tragic and the humorous, the overthrow of thrones and the ordinary description of manners. But in this awkward compromise the poetic spirit of ancient comedy disappears; only the dress and the gilding remain. The new characters are gross and immoral, with the instincts of a lackey beneath the dress of a lord, which is the more shocking, because by it Dryden contradicts his own talents, being at bottom grave and a poet; he follows the fashion, and not his own mind; he plays the libertine with deliberate forethought, to adapt himself to the taste of the

[1] His "Wild Gallant" dates from 1662.

day.[2] He plays the blackguard awkwardly and dogmatically; he is impious without enthusiasm, and in measured periods. One of his gallants cries:

> "Is not love love without a priest and altars?
> The temples are inanimate, and know not
> What vows are made in them; the priest stands ready
> For his hire, and cares not what hearts he couples;
> Love alone is marriage." [3]

Hippolita says, "I wished the ball might be kept perpetually in our cloister, and that half the handsome nuns in it might be turned to men, for the sake of the other." [4] Dryden has no tact or contrivance. In his "Spanish Friar," the queen, a good enough woman, tells Torrismond that she is going to have the old dethroned king put to death, in order to marry him, Torrismond, more at her ease. Presently she is informed that the murder is completed. "What hinders now," says she, "but that the holy priest, in secret joins our mutual vows? and then this night, this happy night, is yours and mine." [5] Side by side with this sensual tragedy, a comic intrigue, pushed to the most indecent familiarity, exhibits the love of a cavalier for a married woman, who in the end turns out to be his sister. Dryden discovers nothing in this situation to shock him. He has lost the commonest repugnances of natural modesty. Translating any pretty broad play, "Amphitryon" for instance, he finds it too pure; he strips off all its small delicacies, and enlarges its very improprieties.[6] Thus Jupiter says:

> "For kings and priests are in a manner bound,
> For reverence' sake, to be close hypocrites." [7]

[2] "We love to get our mistresses, and purr over them, as cats do over mice, and let them get a little way; and all the pleasure is to pat them back again." —"Mock Astrologer," ii. 1.

Wildblood says to his mistress: "I am none of those unreasonable lovers that propose to themselves the loving to eternity. A month is commonly my stint." And Jacintha replies: "Or would not a fortnight serve our turn?" —Ibid.

Frequently one would think Dryden was translating Hobbes, by the harshness of his jests.

[3] "Love in a Nunnery," ii. 3.

[4] Ibid. iii. 3.

[5] "Spanish Friar," iii. 3. And jumbled with the plot we keep meeting with political allusions. This is a mark of the time. Torrismond, to excuse himself from marrying the queen, says, "Power which in one age is tyranny is ripen'd in the next to true succession. She's in possession."—"Spanish Friar," iv. 2.

[6] Plautus's "Amphitryon" has been imitated by Dryden and Molière. Sir Walter Scott, in the introduction to Dryden's play, says: "He is, in general, coarse and vulgar, where Molière is witty; and where the Frenchman ventures upon a double meaning, the Englishman always contrives to make it a single one."—Tr.

[7] "Amphitryon," i. 1.

And he proceeds thereupon boldly to lay bare his own despotism. In reality, his sophisms and his shamelessness serve Dryden as a means of decrying by rebound the arbitrary Divinity of the theologians. He lets Jupiter say:

> "Fate is what I,
> By virtue of omnipotence, have made it;
> And power omnipotent can do no wrong!
> Not to myself, because I will it so;
> Nor yet to men, for what they are is mine.—
> This night I will enjoy Amphitryon's wife;
> For when I made her, I decreed her such
> As I should please to love." [8]

This open pedantry is changed into open lust as soon as Jupiter sees Alcmena. No detail is omitted: Jupiter speaks his whole mind to her, and before the maids; and next morning, when he is going away, she outdoes him: she hangs on to him, and indulges in the most familiar details. All the noble externals of high gallantry are torn off like a troublesome garment; it is a cynical recklessness in place of aristocratic decency; the scene is written after the example of Charles II and Castlemaine, not of Louis XIV and Mme. de Montespan.[9]

Section VIII.—Wycherley

I pass over several writers: Crowne, author of "Sir Courtly Nice"; Shadwell, an imitator of Ben Jonson; Mrs. Aphra Behn, who calls herself Astræa, a spy and a courtesan, paid by government and the public. Etherege is the first to set the example of imitative comedy in his "Man of Fashion," and to depict only the manners of his age; for the rest he is an open roisterer, and frankly describes his habits:

> "From hunting whores, and haunting play,
> And minding nothing all the day,
> And all the night too, you will say. . . ."

[8] "Amphitryon," i. 1.

[9] As Jupiter is departing, on the plea of daylight, Alcmena says to him:

> "But you and I will draw our curtains close,
> Extinguish daylight, and put out the sun.
> Come back, my lord. . . .
> You have not yet laid long enough in bed
> To warm your widowed side."
> —Act ii. 2.

Compare Plautus's Roman matron and Molière's honest Frenchwoman with this expansive female. [Louis XIV and Mme. de Montespan were not very decent either. See "Mémoires de Saint-Simon."]—Tr.

Such were his pursuits in London; and further on, in a letter from Ratisbon to Lord Middleton,

> "He makes grave legs in formal fetters,
> Converses with fools and writes dull letters;"

and gets small consolation out of the German ladies. In this grave mood Etherege undertook the duties of an ambassador. One day, having dined too freely, he fell from the top of a staircase, and broke his neck; a death of no great importance. But the hero of this society was William Wycherley, the coarsest writer who ever polluted the stage. Being sent to France during the Revolution, he there became a Roman Catholic; then on his return abjured; then in the end, as Pope tells us, abjured again. Robbed of their Protestant ballast, these shallow brains ran from dogma to dogma, from superstition to incredulity or indifference, to end in a state of fear. He had learned at M. de Montausier's [1] residence the art of wearing gloves and a peruke, which sufficed in those days to make a gentleman. This merit, and the success of a filthy piece, "Love in a Wood," drew upon him the eyes of the Duchess of Cleveland, mistress of the king and of anybody. This woman, who used to have amours with a rope-dancer, picked him up one day in the very midst of the Ring. She put her head out of her carriage-window, and cried to him before all, "Sir, you are a rascal, a villain, the son of a ——." Touched by this compliment, he accepted her favors, and in consequence obtained those of the king. He lost them, married the Countess of Drogheda, a woman of bad temper, ruined himself, remained seven years in prison, passed the remainder of his life in pecuniary difficulties, regretting his youth, losing his memory, scribbling bad verses, which he got Pope to correct, amidst many twitches of wounded self-esteem, stringing together dull obscenities, dragging his worn-out body and enervated brain through the stages of misanthropy and libertinage, playing the miserable part of a toothless roisterer and a white-haired blackguard. Eleven days before his death he married a young girl, who turned out to be a strumpet. He ended as he had begun, by stupidity and misconduct, having succeeded neither in becoming happy nor honest, having used his vigorous

[1] Himself a Huguenot, who had become a Roman Catholic, and the husband of Julie d'Angennes, for whom the French poets composed the celebrated "Guirlande."—Tr.

intelligence and real talent only to his own injury and the injury of others.

The reason was, that Wycherley was not an epicurean born. His nature, genuinely English, that is to say, energetic and sombre, rebelled against the easy and amiable carelessness which enables one to take life as a pleasure-party. His style is labored, and troublesome to read. His tone is virulent and bitter. He frequently forces his comedy in order to get at spiteful satire. Effort and animosity mark all that he says or puts into the mouths of others. It is Hobbes, not meditative and calm, but active and angry, who sees in man nothing but vice, yet feels himself man to the very core. The only fault he rejects is hypocrisy; the only virtue he preaches is frankness. He wants others to confess their vice, and he begins by confessing his own. "Though I cannot lie like them (the poets), I am as vain as they; I cannot but publicly give your Grace my humble acknowledgments. . . . This is the poet's gratitude, which in plain English is only pride and ambition." [2] We find in him no poetry of expression, no glimpse of the ideal, no settled morality which could console, raise, or purify men. He shuts them up in their perversity and uncleanness, and installs himself among them. He shows them the filth of the lowest depths in which he confines them; he expects them to breathe this atmosphere; he plunges them into it, not to disgust them with it as by an accidental fall, but to accustom them to it as if it were their natural element. He tears down the partitions and decorations by which they endeavor to conceal their state, or regulate their disorder. He takes pleasure in making them fight, he delights in the hubbub of their unfettered instincts; he loves the violent changes of the human mass, the confusion of their wicked deeds, the rawness of their bruises. He strips their lusts, sets them forth at full length, and of course feels them himself; and whilst he condemns them as nauseous, he enjoys them. People take what pleasure they can get: the drunkards in the suburbs, if asked how they can relish their miserable liquor, will tell you it makes them drunk as soon as better stuff, and that is the only pleasure they have.

I can understand that an author may dare much in a novel.

[2] "The Dramatic Works of Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar," ed. Leigh Hunt, 1840. Dedication of "Love in a Wood" to her Grace the Duchess of Cleveland.

It is a psychological study, akin to criticism or history, having almost equal license, because it contributes almost equally to explain the anatomy of the heart. It is quite necessary to expose moral diseases, especially when this is done to add to science, coldly, accurately, and in the fashion of a dissection. Such a book is by its nature abstruse; it must be read in the study, by lamp-light. But transport it to the stage, exaggerate the bedroom liberties, give them additional life by a few disreputable scenes, bestow bodily vigor upon them by the energetic action and words of the actresses; let the eyes and the senses be filled with them, not the eyes of an individual spectator, but of a thousand men and women mingled together in the pit, excited by the interest of the story, by the correctness of the literal imitation, by the glitter of the lights, by the noise of applause, by the contagion of impressions which run like a shudder through fiery and longing minds. That was the spectacle which Wycherley furnished, and which the court appreciated. Is it possible that a public, and a select public, could come and listen to such scenes? In "Love in a Wood," amidst the complications of nocturnal rendezvous, and violations effected or begun, we meet with a witling, named Dapperwit, who desires to sell his mistress Lucy to a fine gentleman of that age, Ranger. With what minuteness he bepraises her! He knocks at her door; the intended purchaser meantime, growing impatient, is treating him like a slave. The mother comes in, but wishing to sell Lucy herself and for her own advantage, scolds them and packs them off. Next appears an old puritanical usurer and hypocrite, named Gripe, who at first will not bargain:

"*Mrs. Joyner.* You must send for something to entertain her with. . . . Upon my life a groat! What will this purchase?

Gripe. Two black pots of ale and a cake, at the cellar—Come, the wine has arsenic in't. . . .

Mrs. J. A treat of a groat! I will not wag.

G. Why don't you go? Here, take more money, and fetch what you will; take here, half-a-crown.

Mrs. J. What will half-a-crown do?

G. Take a crown then, an angel, a piece;—begone!

Mrs. J. A treat only will not serve my turn; I must buy t · poor wretch there some toys.

G. What toys? what? speak quickly.

Mrs. J. Pendants, necklaces, fans, ribbons, points, laces, stockings, gloves. . . .

G. But here, take half a piece for the other things.

Mrs. J. Half a piece!—

G. Prithee, begone!—take t'other piece then—two pieces—three pieces—five! here; 'tis all I have.

Mrs. J. I must have the broad-seal ring too, or I stir not." [3]

She goes away at last, having extorted all, and Lucy plays the innocent, seems to think that Gripe is a dancing-master, and asks for a lesson. What scenes, what double meanings! At last she calls out, her mother, Mrs. Crossbite, breaks open the door, and enters with men placed there beforehand; Gripe is caught in the trap; they threaten to call in the constable, they swindle him out of five hundred pounds.

Need I recount the plot of the "Country Wife"? It is useless to wish to skim the subject only; we sink deeper and deeper. Horner, a gentleman returned from France, spreads the report that he is no longer able to trouble the peace of husbands. You may imagine what becomes of such a subject in Wycherley's hands, and he draws from it all that it contains. Women converse about Horner's condition, even before him; they suffer themselves to be undeceived, and boast of it. Three of them come to him and feast, drink, sing—such songs! The excess of orgie triumphs, adjudges itself the crown, displays itself in maxims. "Our virtue," says one of them, "is like the statesman's religion, the Quaker's word, the gamester's oath, and the great man's honor; but to cheat those that trust us." [4] In the last scene, the suspicions which had been aroused, are set at rest by a new declaration of Horner. All the marriages are polluted, and the carnival ends by a dance of deceived husbands. To crown all, Horner recommends his example to the public, and the actress who comes on to recite the epilogue, completes the shamefulness of the piece, by warning gallants that they must look what they are doing; for that if they can deceive men, "we women—there's no cozening us." [5]

But the special and most extraordinary sign of the times is, that amid all these provocatives, no repellent circumstance is omitted, and that the narrator seems to aim as much at disgusting as at depraving us.[6] Every moment the fine gentlemen, even the ladies, introduce into their conversation the ways and

[3] Act iii. 3.
[4] "The Country Wife," v. 4.
[5] Read the epilogue, and see what words and details authors dared then to put in the mouths of actresses.
[6] "That spark, who has his fruitless

means by which, since the sixteenth century, love has endeavored to adorn itself. Dapperwit, when making an offer of Lucy, says, in order to account for the delay: "Pish! give her but leave to . . . put on . . . the long patch under the left eye; awaken the roses on her cheeks with some Spanish wool, and warrant her breath with some lemon-peel." [7] Lady Flippant, alone in the park, cries out: "Unfortunate lady that I am! I have left the herd on purpose to be chased, and have wandered this hour here; but the park affords not so much as a satyr for me; and no Burgundy man or drunken scourer will reel my way. The rag-women and cinder-women have better luck than I." [8]

Judge by these quotations, which are the best, of the remainder! Wycherley makes it his business to revolt even the senses; the nose, the eyes, everything suffers in his plays; the audience must have had the stomach of a sailor. And from this abyss English literature has ascended to the strict morality, the excessive decency which it now possesses! This stage is a declared war against beauty and delicacy of every kind. If Wycherley borrows a character anywhere, it is only to do violence, or degrade it to the level of his own characters. If he imitates the Agnes of Molière,[9] as he does in the "Country Wife," he marries her in order to profane marriage, deprives her of honor, still more of modesty, still more of grace, and changes her artless tenderness into shameless instincts and scandalous confessions. If he takes Shakespeare's Viola, as in the "Plain Dealer," it is to drag her through the vileness of infamy, amidst brutalities and surprises. If he translates the part of Molière's Célimène, he wipes out at one stroke the manners of a great lady, the woman's delicacy, the tact of the lady of the house, the po-

designs upon the bed-ridden rich widow, down to the sucking heiress in her . . . clout."—"Love in a Wood," i. 2.

Mrs. Flippant: "Though I had married the fool, I thought to have reserved the wit as well as other ladies."—Ibid.

Dapperwit: "I will contest with no rival, not with my old rival your coachman."—Ibid.

"She has a complexion like a Holland cheese, and no more teeth left, than such as give a haut goût to her breath." Ibid. ii. 1.

[7] Ibid. iii. 2.

[8] Ibid. v. 2.

[9] The letter of Agnes, in Molière's "L'École des Femmes," iii. 4, begins thus: "Je veux vous écrire, et je suis bien en peine par où je m'y prendrai. J'ai des pensées que je désirerais que vous sussiez; mais je ne sais comment faire pour vous les dire, et je me défie de mes paroles," etc. Observe how Wycherley translates it: "Dear, sweet Mr. Horner, my husband would have me send you a base, rude, unmannerly letter; but I won't—and would have me forbid you loving me; but I won't—and would have me say to you, I hate you, poor Mr. Horner; but I won't tell a lie for him—for I'm sure if you and I were in the country at cards together, I could not help treading on your toe under the table, or rubbing knees with you, and staring in your face, till you saw me, and then looking down, and blushing for an hour together," etc.—"Country Wife," iv. 2.

liteness, the refined air, the superiority of wit and knowledge of the world, in order to substitute for them the impudence and deceit of a foul-mouthed courtesan. If he invents an almost innocent girl, Hippolita,[10] he begins by putting into her mouth words that will not bear transcribing. Whatever he does or says, whether he copies or originates, blames or praises, his stage is a defamation of mankind, which repels even when it attracts, and which sickens a man while it corrupts.

A certain gift hovers over all—namely, vigor—which is never absent in England, and gives a peculiar character to their virtues as well as to their vices. When we have removed the oratorical and heavily constructed phrases imitated from the French, we get at the genuine English talent—a deep sympathy with nature and life. Wycherley possessed that lucid and vigorous perspicacity which in any particular situation seizes upon gesture, physical expression, evident detail, which pierces to the depths of the crude and base, which hits off, not men in general, and passion as it ought to be, but an individual man, and passion as it is. He is a realist, not of set purpose, as the realists of our day, but naturally. In a violent manner he lays on his plaster over the grinning and pimpled faces of his rascals, in order to bring before our very eyes the stern mask to which the living imprint of their ugliness has stuck on the way. He crams his plays with incident, he multiples action, he pushes comedy to the verge of dramatic effect; he hustles his characters amidst surprises and violence, and all but stultifies them in order to exaggerate his satire. Observe in Olivia, a copy of Célimène, the fury of the passions which he depicts. She describes her friends, as does Célimène, but with what insults! Novel, a coxcomb, says:

"Madam, I have been treated to-day with all the ceremony and kindness imaginable at my lady Autumn's. But the nauseous old woman at the upper end of her table . . ."

"*Olivia.* Revives the old Grecian custom, of serving in a death's head with their banquets. . . . I detest her hollow cherry cheeks: she looks like an old coach new painted. . . . She is still most splendidly, gallantly ugly, and looks like an ill piece of daubing in a rich frame." [11]

[10] In the "Gentleman Dancing-Master."
[11] "The Plain Dealer," ii. 1.

The scene is borrowed from Molière's "Misanthrope" and the "Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes"; but how transformed! Our modern nerves would not endure the portrait Olivia draws of Manly, her lover: he hears her unawares; she forthwith stands before him, laughs at him to his face, declares herself to be married; tells him she means to keep the diamonds which he has given her, and defies him. Fidelia says to her:

"But, madam, what could make you dissemble love to him, when 'twas so hard a thing for you; and flatter his love to you?"

"*Olivia.* That which makes all the world flatter and dissemble, 'twas his money: I had a real passion for that. . . . As soon as I had his money, I hastened his departure, like a wife, who when she has made the most of a dying husband's breath, pulls away his pillow." [12]

The last phrase is rather that of a morose satirist than of an accurate observer. The woman's impudence is like a professed courtesan's. In love at first sight with Fidelia, whom she takes for a young man, she hangs upon her neck, "stuffs her with kisses," gropes about in the dark, crying, "Where are thy lips?" There is a kind of animal ferocity in her love. She sends her husband off by an improvised comedy; then skipping about like a dancing-girl cries out: "Go, husband, and come up, friend; just the buckets in the well; the absence of one brings the other." "But I hope, like them, too, they will not meet in the way, jostle, and clash together." [13] Surprised in *flagrante delicto,* and having confessed all to her cousin, as soon as she sees a chance of safety, she swallows her avowal with the effrontery of an actress:

"*Eliza.* Well, cousin, this, I confess, was reasonable hypocrisy; you were the better for 't.

Olivia. What hypocrisy?

E. Why, this last deceit of your husband was lawful, since in your own defence.

O. What deceit? I'd have you know I never deceived my husband.

E. You do not understand me, sure; I say, this was an honest come-off, and a good one. But 'twas a sign your gallant had had enough of your conversation, since he could so dexterously cheat your husband in passing for a woman.

O. What d'ye mean, once more, with my gallant, and passing for a woman?

E. What do you mean? you see your husband took him for a woman!

[12] "The Plain Dealer," iv. 2. [13] Ibid.

O. Whom?

E. Heyday! why the man he found with. . . .

O. Lord, you rave sure!

E. Why, did you not tell me last night. . . . Fy, this fooling is so insipid, 'tis offensive.

O. And fooling with my honour will be more offensive. . . .

E. O admirable confidence! . . .

O. Confidence, to me! to me such language! nay, then I'll never see your face again. . . . Lettice, where are you? Let us begone from this censorious ill woman. . . .

E. One word first, pray, madam; can you swear that whom your husband found you with . . .

O. Swear! ay, that whosoever 'twas that stole up, unknown, into my room, when 'twas dark, I know not, whether man or woman, by heavens, by all that's good; or, may I never more have joys here, or in the other world! Nay, may I eternally—

E. Be damned. So, so, you are damned enough already by your oaths. . . . Yet take this advice with you, in this plain-dealing age, to leave off forswearing yourself. . . .

O. O hideous, hideous advice! let us go out of the hearing of it. She will spoil us, Lettice." [14]

Here is animation; and if I dared to relate the boldness and the asseveration in the night scene, it would easily appear that Mme. Marneffe had a sister, and Balzac a predecessor.

There is a character who shows in a concise manner Wycherley's talent and his morality, wholly formed of energy and indelicacy—Manly, the "plain dealer," so manifestly the author's favorite, that his contemporaries gave him the name of his hero for a surname. Manly is copied after Alceste, and the great difference between the two heroes shows the difference between the two societies and the two countries.[15] Manly is not a courtier, but a ship-captain, with the bearing of a sailor of the time, his cloak stained with tar, and smelling of brandy,[16] ready with blows or foul oaths, calling those he came across dogs and slaves, and when they displeased him, kicking them downstairs. And he speaks in this fashion to a lord with a voice like a mastiff.

[14] "The Plain Dealer," v. 1.

[15] Compare with the savings of Alceste, in Molière's "Misanthrope," such tirades as this: "Such as you, like common whores and pickpockets, are only dangerous to those you embrace." And with the character of Philinte, in the same French play, such phrases as these: "But, faith, could you think I was a friend to those I hugged, kissed, flattered, bowed to? When their backs were turned, did not I tell you they were rogues, villains, rascals, whom I despised and hated?"

[16] Olivia says: "Then shall I have again my alcove smell like a cabin, my chamber perfumed with his tarpaulin Brandenburgh; and hear vollies of brandy-sighs, enough to make a fog in one's room."—"The Plain Dealer," ii. 1.

Then, when the poor nobleman tries to whisper something in his ear, "My lord, all that you have made me know by your whispering which I knew not before, is that you have a stinking breath; there's a secret for your secret." When he is in Olivia's drawing-room, with "these fluttering parrots of the town, these apes, these echoes of men," he bawls out as if he were on his quarter-deck, "Peace, you Bartholomew fair buffoons!" He seizes them by the collar, and says: "Why, you impudent, pitiful wretches, . . . you are in all things so like women, that you may think it in me a kind of cowardice to beat you. Begone, I say. . . . No chattering, baboons; instantly begone, or . . ." Then he turns them out of the room. These are the manners of a plain-dealing man. He has been ruined by Olivia, whom he loves, and who dismisses him. Poor Fidelia, disguised as a man, and whom he takes for a timid youth, comes and finds him while he is fretting with anger:

"*Fidelia.* I warrant you, sir; for, at worst, I could beg or steal for you.

Manly. Nay, more bragging! . . . You said you'd beg for me.

F. I did, sir.

M. Then you shall beg for me.

F. With all my heart, sir.

M. That is, pimp for me.

F. How, sir?

M. D'ye start? . . . No more dissembling: here (I say,) you must go use it for me to Olivia. . . . Go, flatter, lie, kneel, promise, anything to get her for me: I cannot live unless I have her." [17]

And when Fidelia returns to him, saying that Olivia has embraced her, by force, in a fit of love, he exclaims: "Her love!—a whore's, a witch's love!—But what, did she not kiss well, sir? I'm sure, I thought her lips—but I must not think of 'em more—but yet they are such I could still kiss—grow to—and then tear off with my teeth, grind 'em into mammocks, and spit 'em into her cuckold's face." [18] These savage words indicate savage actions. He goes by night to enter Olivia's house with Fidelia, and under her name; and Fidelia tries to prevent him, through jealousy. Then his blood boils, a storm of fury mounts to his face, and he speaks to her in a whispering, hissing voice: "What, you are my rival, then! and therefore you shall stay,

[17] "The Plain Dealer," iii. 1. [18] Ibid. iv. 1.

and keep the door for me, whilst I go in for you; but when I'm gone, if you dare to stir off from this very board, or breathe the least murmuring accent, I'll cut her throat first; and if you love her, you will not venture her life. Nay, then I'll cut your throat too, and I know you love your own life at least. . . . Not a word more, lest I begin my revenge on her by killing you." [19] He knocks over Olivia's husband, another traitor seizes from her the casket of jewels he had given her, casts her one or two of them, saying, "Here, madam, I never yet left my wench unpaid," and gives this same casket to Fidelia, whom he marries. All these actions then appeared natural. Wycherley took to himself in his dedication the title of his hero, "Plain Dealer"; he fancied he had drawn the portrait of a frank, honest man, and praised himself for having set the public a fine example; he had only given them the model of an unreserved and energetic brute. That was all the manliness that was left in this pitiable world. Wycherley deprived man of his ill-fitting French cloak, and displayed him with his framework of muscles, and in his naked shamelessness.

And in the midst of all these, a great poet, blind, and sunk into obscurity, his soul saddened by the misery of the times, thus depicted the madness of the infernal rout:

> "Belial came last, than whom a spirit more lewd
> Fell not from heaven, or more gross to love
> Vice for itself . . . who more oft than he
> In temples and at altars, when the priest
> Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who fill'd
> With lust and violence the house of God?
> In courts and palaces he also reigns,
> And in luxurious cities, where the noise
> Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
> And injury, and outrage: and when night
> Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
> Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine." [20]

[19] "The Plain Dealer," iv. 2.

[20] "Paradise Lost," book i. lines 490-502.

Part II.—The Worldlings

Section I.—Court Life in Europe

In the seventeenth century a new mode of life was inaugurated in Europe, the worldly, which soon took the lead of and shaped every other. In France especially, and in England, it appeared and gained ground, from the same causes and at the same time.

In order to people the drawing-rooms, a certain political condition is necessary; and this condition, which is the supremacy of the king in combination with a regular system of police, was established at the same period on both sides of the Channel. A regular police brings about peace among men, draws them out of their feudal independence and provincial isolation, increases and facilitates intercommunication, confidence, union, comfort, and pleasures. The kingly supremacy calls into existence a court, the centre of intercourse, from which all favors flow, and which calls for a display of pleasure and splendor. The aristocracy thus attracted to one another, and attracted to the throne by security, curiosity, amusement, and interest, meet together, and become at once men of the world and men of the court. They are no longer, like the barons of a preceding age, standing in their lofty halls, armed and stern, possessed by the idea that they might perhaps, when they quit their palace, cut each other to pieces, and that if they fall to blows in the precincts of the court, the executioner is ready to cut off their hand and stop the bleeding with a red-hot iron; knowing, moreover, that the king may probably have them beheaded to-morrow, and ready accordingly to cast themselves on their knees and break out into protestations of submissive fidelity, but counting under their breath the number of swords that will be mustered on their side, and the trusty men who keep sentinel behind the drawbridge of their castles.[1] The rights, privileges, constraints, and attractions of feudal life have disappeared. There is no more need that the manor should be a fortress. These men can no longer experience the joy of reigning there as in a petty state. It has palled on them, and they quit it. Having no further cause to

[1] Consult all Shakespeare's historical plays.

quarrel with the king, they go to him. His court is a drawing-room, most agreeable to the sight, and most serviceable to those who frequent it. Here are festivities, splendid furniture, a decked and select company, news and tittle-tattle; here they find pensions, titles, places for themselves and their friends; they receive amusement and profit; it is all gain and all pleasure. Here they attend the levée, are present at dinners, return to the ball, sit down to play, are there when the king goes to bed. Here they cut a dash with their half-French dress, their wigs, their hats loaded with feathers, their trunk-hose, their cannions, the large rosettes on their shoes. The ladies paint and patch their faces, display robes of magnificent satin and velvet, laced up with silver and very long, and above you may see their white busts, whose brilliant nakedness is extended to their shoulders and arms. They are gazed upon, saluted, approached. The king rides on horseback in Hyde Park; by his side canters the queen, and with her the two mistresses, Lady Castlemaine and Mrs. Stewart: "the queen in a white-laced waistcoate and a crimson short pettycoate, and her hair dressed *à la négligence;* . . . Mrs. Stewart with her hat cocked and a red plume, with her sweet eye, little Roman nose, and excellent taille." [2] Then they returned to Whitehall "where all the ladies walked, talking and fiddling with their hats and feathers, and changing and trying one another's by one another's heads, and laughing." [3] In such fine company there was no lack of gallantry. Perfumed gloves, pocket mirrors, work-cases fitted up, apricot paste, essences, and other little love-tokens, came over every week from Paris. London furnished more substantial gifts, ear-rings, diamonds, brilliants, and golden guineas; the fair ones put up with these, as if they had come from a greater distance.[4] There were plenty of intrigues—Heaven knows how many or of what kind. Naturally, also, conversation does not stop. They did not mince the adventures of Miss Warmestré the haughty, who, "deceived apparently by a bad reckoning, took the liberty of lying-in in the midst of the court." [5] They spoke in whispers about the attempts of Miss Hobart, or the happy misfortune of Miss Churchill, who, being very plain, but having the wit to fall from her horse, touched the eyes and heart of the Duke of York. The Chevalier de Gram-

[2] Pepys's Diary, ii. July 13, 1663.
[3] Ibid.
[4] "Mémoires de Grammont," by A. Hamilton.
[5] Ibid. ch. ix.

mont relates to the king the history of Termes, or of Poussatin the almoner; everyone leaves the dance to hear it; and when it is over, they all burst out laughing. We perceive that this is not the world of Louis XIV, and yet it is a world; and if it has more froth, it runs with the identical current. The great object here also is selfish amusement, and to put on appearances; people strive to be men of fashion; a coat bestows a certain kind of glory on its wearer. De Grammont was in despair when the roguery of his valet obliged him to wear the same suit twice over. Another courtier piques himself on his songs and his guitar-playing. "Russell had a collection of two or three hundred quadrilles in tablature, all of which he used to dance without ever having studied them." Jermyn was known for his success with the fair. "A gentleman," said Etherege, "ought to dress well, dance well, fence well, have a talent for love-letters, a pleasant voice in a room, to be always very amorous, sufficiently discreet, but not too constant." These are already the court manners as they continued in France up to the time of Louis XVI. With such manners, words take the place of deeds. Life is passed in visits and conversation. The art of conversing became the chief of all; of course, to converse agreeably, to fill up an idle hour, on twenty subjects in an hour, hinting always, without going deep, in such a fashion that conversation should not be a labor, but a promenade. It was followed up by letters written in the evening, by madrigals or epigrams to be read in the morning, by drawing-room tragedies, or caricatures of society. In this manner a new literature was produced, the work and the portrait of the world which was at once its audience and its model, which sprung from it, and ended in it.

Section II.—Dawn of the Classic Spirit

The art of conversation being then a necessity, people set themselves to acquire it. A revolution was effected in mind as well as in manners. As soon as circumstances assume new aspects, thought assumes a new form. The Renaissance is ended, the Classic Age begins, and the artist makes room for the author. Man is returned from his first voyage round the world of facts; enthusiasm, the labor of a troubled imagination, the tumultuous crowding of new ideas, all the faculties which a first discovery

calls into play, have become satiated, then depressed. The incentive is blunted, because the work is done. The eccentricities, the far vistas, the unbridled originality, the all-powerful flights of genius aimed at the centre of truth through the extremes of folly, all the characteristics of grand inventive genius have disappeared. The imagination is tempered; the mind is disciplined: it retraces its steps; it walks its own domain once more with a satisfied curiosity, an acquired experience. Judgment, as it were, chews the cud and corrects itself. It finds a religion, an art, a philosophy, to reform or to form anew. It is no longer the minister of inspired intuition, but of a regular process of decomposition. It no longer feels or looks for generalities; it handles and observes specialties. It selects and classifies, it refines and regulates. It ceases to be a creator, and becomes a discourser. It quits the province of invention and settles down into criticism. It enters upon that magnificent and confused aggregate of dogmas and forms, in which the preceding age has gathered up indiscriminately its dreams and discoveries; it draws thence the ideas which it modifies and verifies. It arranges them in long chains of simple ratiocination, which descend link by link to the vulgar apprehension. It expresses them in exact terms, which present a graduated series, step by step, to the vulgar reasoning power. It marks out in the entire field of thought a series of compartments and a network of passages, which, excluding all error and digression, lead gradually every mind to every object. It becomes at last clear, convenient, charming. And the world lends its aid; contingent circumstances finish the natural revolution; the taste becomes changed through a declivity of its own, but also through the influence of the court. When conversation becomes the chief business of life, it modifies style after its own image, and according to its peculiar needs. It repudiates digression, excessive metaphor, impassioned exclamations, all loose and overstrained ways. We cannot bawl, gesticulate, dream aloud, in a drawing-room; we restrain ourselves; we criticise and keep watch over ourselves; we pass the time in narration and discussion; we stand in need of concise expression, exact language, clear and connected reasoning; otherwise we cannot fence or comprehend each other. Correct style, good language, conversation, are self-generated, and very quickly perfected; for refinement is the aim of the man of the world: he

studies to render everything more becoming and more serviceable, his furniture and his speech, his periods and his dress. Art and artifice are there the distinguishing mark. People pride themselves on being perfect in their mother-tongue, never to miss the correct sense of any word, to avoid vulgar expressions, to string together their antitheses, to develop their thoughts, to employ rhetoric. Nothing is more marked than the contrast of the conversations of Shakespeare and Fletcher with those of Wycherley and Congreve. In Shakespeare the dialogue resembles an assault of arms; we could imagine men of skill fencing with words and gestures as it were in a fencing-school. They play the buffoon, sing, think aloud, burst out into a laugh, into puns, into fishwomen's talk and into poets' talk, into quaint whimsicalities; they have a taste for the ridiculous, the sparkling; one of them dances while he speaks; they would willingly walk on their hands; there is not one grain of calculation to more than three grains of folly in their heads. In Wycherley, on the other hand, the characters are steady; they reason and dispute; ratiocination is the basis of their style; they are so perfect that the thing is overdone, and we see through it all the author stringing his phrases. They arrange a tableau, multiply ingenious comparisons, balance well-ordered periods. One character delivers a satire, another serves up a little essay on morality. We might draw from the comedies of the time a volume of sentences; they are charged with literary morsels which foreshadow the "Spectator."[1] They hunt for clever and suitable expressions, they clothe indecent circumstances with decent words; they glide swiftly over the fragile ice of decorum, and scratch the surface without breaking it. I see gentlemen, seated in gilt arm-chairs, of quiet wit and studied speech, cool in observation, eloquent sceptics, expert in the fashions, lovers of elegance, liking fine talk as much from vanity as from taste, who, while conversing between a compliment and a reverence, will no more neglect their good style than their neat gloves or their hat.

[1] Take, for example, Farquhar's "Beaux Stratagem," ii. 1.

Section III.—Sir William Temple

Amongst the best and most agreeable specimens of this new refinement, appears Sir William Temple, a diplomatist and man of the world, cautious, prudent, and polite, gifted with tact in conversation and in business, expert in the knowledge of the times, and in the art of not compromising himself, adroit in pressing forward and in standing aside, who knew how to attract to himself the favor and the expectations of England, to obtain the eulogies of men of letters, of savants, of politicians, of the people, to gain a European reputation, to win all the crowns appropriated to science, patriotism, virtue, genius, without having too much of science, patriotism, genius, or virtue. Such a life is the masterpiece of that age: fine externals on a foundation not so fine; this is its abstract. His manner as an author agrees with his maxims as a politician. His principles and style are homogeneous; a genuine diplomatist, such as one meets in the drawing-rooms, having probed Europe and touched everywhere the bottom of things; tired of everything, specially of enthusiasm, admirable in an arm-chair or at a levée, a good story-teller, waggish if need were, but in moderation, accomplished in the art of maintaining the dignity of his station and of enjoying himself. In his retreat at Sheen, afterwards at Moor Park, he employs his leisure in writing; and he writes as a man of his rank would speak, very well, that is to say, with dignity and facility, particularly when he writes of the countries he has visited, of the incidents he has seen, the noble amusements which serve to pass his time.[1] He has an income of fifteen hundred a year, and a nice sinecure in Ireland. He retired from public life during momentous struggles, siding neither with the king nor against him, resolved, as he tells us himself, not to set himself against the current when the current is irresistible. He lives peacefully in the country with his wife, his sister, his secretary, his dependents, receiving the visits of strangers, who are anxious to see the negotiator of the Triple Alliance, and sometimes of the new King William, who, unable to obtain his services, comes occasionally to seek his counsel. He plants and gardens, in a fertile soil, in a country the climate of which agrees with him,

[1] Consult especially, "Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands; Of Gardening."

amongst regular flower-beds, by the side of a very straight canal, bordered by a straight terrace; and he lauds himself in set terms, and with suitable discreetness, for the character he possesses and the part he has chosen: "I have often wondered how such sharp and violent invectives come to be made so generally against Epicurus, by the ages that followed him, whose admirable wit, felicity of expression, excellence of nature, sweetness of conversation, temperance of life and constancy of death, made him so beloved by his friends, admired by his scholars, and honoured by the Athenians." [2] He does well to defend Epicurus, because he has followed his precepts, avoiding every great confusion of the mind, and installing himself, like one of Lucretius's gods, in the interspace of worlds; as he says: "Where factions were once entered and rooted in a state, they thought it madness for good men to meddle with public affairs." And again: "The true service of the public is a business of so much labour and so much care, that though a good and wise man may not refuse it, if he be called to it by his prince or his country, and thinks he may be of more than vulgar use, yet he will seldom or never seek it; but leaves it commonly to men who, under the disguise of public good, pursue their own designs of wealth, power, and such bastard honours as usually attend them, not that which is the true, and only true, reward of virtue." [3] This is how he ushers himself in. Thus presented to us, he goes on to talk of the gardening which he practises, and first of the six grand Epicureans who have illustrated the doctrine of their master—Cæsar, Atticus, Lucretius, Horace, Mæcenas, Vergil; then of the various sorts of gardens which have a name in the world, from the garden of Eden, and the garden of Alcinous, to those of Holland and Italy; and all this at some length, like a man who listens to himself and is listened to by others, who does rather profusely the honors of his house and of his wit to his guests, but does them with grace and dignity, not dogmatically nor haughtily, but in varied tones, aptly modulating his voice and gestures. He recounts the four kinds of grapes which he has introduced into England, and confesses that he has been extravagant, yet does not regret it; for five years he has not once wished to see London. He intersperses technical advice with anec-

[2] Temple's Works: "Of Gardening," ii. 190.

[3] Ibid. 184.

dotes; whereof one relates to Charles II, who praised the English climate above all others, saying: "He thought that was the best climate, where he could be abroad in the air with pleasure, or at least without trouble or inconvenience, most days of the year, and most hours of the day." Another about the Bishop of Munster, who, unable to grow anything but cherries in his orchard, had collected all varieties, and so perfected the trees that he had fruit from May to September. The reader feels an inward gratification when he hears an eye-witness relate minute details of such great men. Our attention is aroused immediately; we in consequence imagine ourselves denizens of the court, and smile complacently; no matter if the details be slender; they serve passably well, they constitute "a half hour with the aristocracy," like a lordly way of taking snuff or shaking the lace of one's ruffles. Such is the interest of courtly conversation; it can be held about nothing; the excellence of the manner lends this nothing a peculiar charm; you hear the sound of the voice, you are amused by the half smile, abandon yourself to the fluent stream, forget that these are ordinary ideas; you observe the narrator, his peculiar breeches, the cane he toys with, the beribboned shoes, his easy walk over the smooth gravel of his garden paths between the faultless hedges; the ear, the mind even is charmed, captivated by the appropriateness of his diction, by the abundance of his ornate periods, by the dignity and fulness of a style which is involuntarily regular, which, at first artificial, like good breeding, ends, like true good breeding, by being changed into a real necessity and a natural talent.

Unfortunately, this talent occasionally leads to blunders; when a man speaks well about everything, he thinks he has a right to speak of everything. He plays the philosopher, the critic, even the man of learning; and indeed becomes so actually, at least with the ladies. Such a man writes, like Temple, "Essays on the Nature of Government," on "Heroic Virtue,"[4] on "Poetry"; that is, little treatises on society, on the beautiful, on the philosophy of history. He is the Locke, the Herder, the Bentley of the drawing-room, and nothing else. Now and then, doubtless, his mother-wit leads him to fair original judgments. Temple was the first to discover a Pindaric glow in the old chant

[4] Compare this essay with that of Carlyle, on "Heroes and Hero-Worship"; the title and subject are similar; it is curious to note the difference of the two centuries.

of Ragnar Lodbrog, and to place Don Quixote in the first rank of modern fictions; moreover, when he handles a subject within his range, like the causes of the power and decline of the Turks, his reasoning is admirable. But otherwise, he is simply a tyro; nay, in him the pedant crops out, and the worst of pedants, who, being ignorant, wishes to seem wise, who quotes the history of every land, hauling in Jupiter, Saturn, Osiris, Fo-hi, Confucius, Manco-Capac, Mahomet, and discourses on all these obscure and unknown civilizations, as if he had laboriously studied them, at the fountain-head and not at second hand, through the extracts of his secretary, or the books of others. One day he came to grief; having plunged into a literary dispute, and claimed superiority for the ancients over the moderns, he imagined himself a Hellenist, an antiquarian, related the voyages of Pythagoras, the education of Orpheus, and remarked that the Greek sages "were commonly excellent poets, and great physicians: they were so learned in natural philosophy, that they foretold not only eclipses in the heavens, but earthquakes at land and storms at sea, great droughts and great plagues, much plenty or much scarcity of certain sorts of fruits or grain; not to mention the magical powers attributed to several of them, to allay storms, to raise gales, to appease commotions of people, to make plagues cease." [5] Admirable faculties, which we no longer possess. Again he regretted the decay of music, "by which men and beasts, fishes, fowls, and serpents, were so frequently enchanted, and their very natures changed; by which the passions of men were raised to the greatest height and violence, and then as suddenly appeased, so as they might be justly said to be turned into lions or lambs, into wolves or into harts, by the powers and charms of this admirable art." [6] He wished to enumerate the greatest modern writers, and forgot to mention in his catalogue, "amongst the Italians, Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, and Tasso; in his list of French, Pascal, Bossuet, Molière, Corneille, Racine, and Boileau; in his list of Spaniards, Lope and Calderon; and in his list of English, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton"; [7] though, by way of compensation, he inserted the names of Paolo Sarpi, Guevara, Sir Philip Sidney, Selden, Voiture, and Bussy-Rabutin, "author of the 'Histoire amoureuse des

[5] Temple's Works, ii.: "An Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning," 155.

[6] Ibid. 165.

[7] Macaulay's Works, vi. 319: "Essay on Sir William Temple."

Gaules.' " To cap all, he declared the fables of Æsop, which are a dull Byzantine compilation, and the letters of Phalaris, a wretched sophistical forgery, to be admirable and authentic: "It may perhaps be further affirmed, in favor of the ancients, that the oldest books we have are still in their kind the best. The two most ancient that I know of in prose, among those we call profane authors, are Æsop's Fables and Phalaris's Epistles, both living near the same time, which was that of Cyrus and Pythagoras. As the first has been agreed by all ages since for the greatest master in his kind, and all others of that sort have been but imitations of his original; so I think the 'Epistles of Phalaris' to have more grace, more spirit, more force of wit and genius, than any others I have ever seen, either ancient or modern." And then, in order to commit himself beyond remedy, he gravely remarked: "I know several learned men (or that usually pass for such, under the name of critics) have not esteemed them genuine, and Politian with some others have attributed them to Lucian; but I think he must have little skill in painting that cannot find out this to be an original: such diversity of passions, upon such variety of actions and passages of life and government, such freedom of thought, such boldness of expression, such bounty to his friends, such scorn of his enemies, such honor of learned men, such esteem of good, such knowledge of life, such contempt of death, with such fierceness of nature and cruelty of revenge, could never be represented but by him that possessed them; and I esteem Lucian to have been no more capable of writing than of acting what Phalaris did. In all one writ, you find the scholar or the sophist; and in all the other, the tyrant and the commander." [8]

Fine rhetoric truly; it is sad that a passage so aptly turned should cover so many stupidities. All this appeared very triumphant; and the universal applause with which this fine oratorical bombast was greeted demonstrates the taste and the culture, the hollowness and the politeness, of the elegant world of which Temple was the marvel, and which, like Temple, loved only the varnish of truth.

[8] "An Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning," 173.

Section IV.—Writers à la Mode

Such were the ornate and polished manners which gradually pierce through debauchery and assume the ascendant. Gradually the current grows clearer, and marks out its course, like a stream, which forcibly entering a new bed, moves with difficulty at first through a heap of mud, then pushes forward its still murky waters, which are purified little by little. These debauchees try to be men of the world, and sometimes succeed in it. Wycherley writes well, very clearly, without the least trace of euphuism, almost in the French manner. He makes Dapperwit say of Lucy, in measured phrase, "She is beautiful without affectation, amorous without impertinence, . . . frolic without rudeness."[1] When he wishes it he is ingenious, and his gentlemen exchange happy comparisons. "Mistresses," says one, "are like books: if you pore upon them too much, they doze you, and make you unfit for company; but if used discreetly, you are the fitter for conversation by 'em." "Yes," says another, "a mistress should be like a little country retreat near the town; not to dwell in constantly, but only for a night and away, to taste the town the better when a man returns."[2] These folk have style, even out of place, often not in accordance with the situation or condition of the persons. A shoemaker in one of Etherege's plays says: "There is never a man in the town lives more like a gentleman with his wife than I do. I never mind her motions; she never inquires into mine. We speak to one another civilly, hate one another heartily." There is perfect art in this little speech; everything is complete, even to the symmetrical antithesis of words, ideas, sounds: what a fine talker is this same satirical shoemaker! After a satire, a madrigal. In one place a certain character exclaims, in the very middle of a dialogue, and in sober prose, "Pretty pouting lips, with a little moisture hanging on them, that look like the Provence rose fresh on the bush, ere the morning sun has quite drawn up the dew." Is not this the graceful gallantry of the court? Rochester himself sometimes might furnish a parallel. Two or three of his songs are still to be found in the expurgated books of extracts in use among modest young girls. It matters nothing

[1] "Love in a Wood," iii. 2. [2] "The Country Wife," i. 1.

that such men are really scamps; they must be every moment using compliments and salutations: before women whom they wish to seduce they are compelled to warble tender words and insipidities: they acknowledge but one check, the necessity to appear well-bred; yet this check suffices to restrain them. Rochester is correct even in the midst of his filth; if he talks lewdly, it is in the able and exact manner of Boileau. All these roisterers aim at being wits and men of the world. Sir Charles Sedley ruins and pollutes himself, but Charles II calls him "the viceroy of Apollo." Buckingham extols "the magic of his style." He is the most charming, the most sought-after of talkers; he makes puns and verses, always agreeable, sometimes refined; he handles dexterously the pretty jargon of mythology; he insinuates into his airy, flowing verses all the dainty and somewhat affected prettiness of the drawing-room. He sings thus to Chloris:

"My passion with your beauty grew,
While Cupid at my heart,
Still as his mother favour'd you,
Threw a new flaming dart."

And then sums up:

"Each gloried in their wanton part:
To make a lover, he
Employ'd the utmost of his art;
To make a beauty, she." [3]

There is no love whatever in these pretty things; they are received as they are presented, with a smile; thy form part of the conventional language, the polite attentions due from gentlemen to ladies. I suppose they would send them in the morning with a nosegay, or a box of preserved fruits. Roscommon indites some verses on a dead lapdog, on a young lady's cold; this naughty cold prevents her singing—cursed be the winter! And hereupon he takes the winter to task, abuses it at length. Here you have the literary amusements of the worldling. They first treat love, then danger, most airily and gayly. On the eve of a naval contest, Dorset, at sea, amidst the pitching of his vessel, addresses a celebrated song to the ladies. There is nothing

[3] Sir Charles Sedley's Works, ed. Briscoe, 1778, 2 vols: "The Mulberry Garden," ii.

weighty in it, either sentiment or wit; people hum the couplets as they pass; they emit a gleam of gayety; the next moment they are forgotten. Dorset at sea writes to the ladies, on the night before an engagement:

> "Let's hear of no inconstancy,
> We have too much of that at sea."

And again:

> "Should foggy Opdam chance to know
> Our sad and dismal story,
> The Dutch would scorn so weak a foe,
> And quit their fort at Goree.
> For what resistance can they find
> From men who've left their hearts behind?"

Then come jests too much in the English style:

> "Then if we write not by each post,
> Think not we are unkind; . . .
> Our tears we'll send a speedier way;
> The tide shall bring them twice a day."

Such tears can hardly flow from sorrow; the lady regards them as the lover sheds them, good-naturedly. She is "at a play" (he thinks so, and tells her so):

> "Whilst you, regardless of our woe,
> Sit careless at a play,
> Perhaps permit some happier man
> To kiss your hand, or flirt your fan." [4]

Dorset hardly troubles himself about it, plays with poetry without excess or assiduity, just as it flows, writing to-day a verse against Dorinda, to-morrow a satire against Mr. Howard, always easily and without study, like a true gentleman. He is an earl, lord-chamberlain, and rich; he pensions and patronizes poets as he would flirts—to amuse himself, without binding himself. The Duke of Buckingham does the same, and also the contrary; caresses one poet, parodies another; is flattered, mocked, and ends by having his portrait taken by Dryden—a *chef d'œuvre*, but not flattering. We have seen such pastimes and such bickerings in France; we find here the same manners and the same literature, because we find here also the same society and the same spirit.

[4] "Works of the Earls of Rochester, Roscommon, and Dorset," 2 vols. 1731, ii. 54.

Among these poets, and in the front rank, is Edmund Waller, who lived and wrote in this manner to his eighty-second year: a man of wit and fashion, well-bred, familiar from his youth with great people, endued with tact and foresight, quick at repartee, not easy to put out of countenance, but selfish, with hardly any feelings, having changed sides more than once, and bearing very well the memory of his tergiversations; in short, a good model of the worldling and the courtier. It was he who, having once praised Cromwell, and afterwards Charles II, but the latter more feebly than the former, said by way of excuse: "Poets, your Majesty, succeed better in fiction than in truth." In this kind of existence, three-quarters of the poetry is written for the occasion; it is the small change of conversation or flattery; it resembles the little events or the little sentiments from which it sprang. One piece is written "Of Tea," another on the queen's portrait; it is necessary to pay court; moreover "His Majesty has requested some verses." One lady makes him a present of a silver pen, straight he throws his gratitude into rhyme; another has the power of sleeping at will, straight a sportive stanza; a false report is spread of her being painted, straight a copy of verses on this grave affair. A little further on there are verses to the Countess of Carlisle on her chamber, condolences to my Lord of Northumberland on the death of his wife, a pretty thing on a lady "passing through a crowd of people," an answer, verse for verse, to some rhymes of Sir John Suckling. He seizes anything frivolous, new, or becoming on the wing; and his poetry is only a written conversation—I mean the conversation which goes on at a ball, when people speak for the sake of speaking, lifting a lock of one's wig, or twisting about a glove. Gallantry holds the chief place here, as it ought to do, and we may be pretty certain that the love is not over-sincere. In reality, Waller sighs on purpose (Sacharissa had a fine dowry), or at least for the sake of good manners: that which is most evident in his tender poems is, that he aims at a flowing style and good rhymes. He is affected, he exaggerates, he strains after wit, he is always an author. Not venturing to address Sacharissa herself, he addresses Mrs. Braughton, her attendant, "his fellow-servant":

> "So, in those nations which the Sun adore,
> Some modest Persian, or some weak-eyed Moor,
> No higher dares advance his dazzled sight

Than to some gilded cloud, which near the light
Of their ascending god adorns the east,
And, graced with his beam, outshines the rest." [5]

A fine comparison! That is a well-made courtesy; I hope Sacharissa responds with one equally correct. His despairs bear the same flavor; he pierces the groves of Penshurst with his cries, "reports his flame to the beeches," and the well-bred beeches "bow their heads, as if they felt the same." [6] It is probable that, in these mournful walks, his greatest care was lest he should wet the soles of his high-heeled shoes. These transports of love bring in the classical machinery, Apollo and the Muses. Apollo is annoyed that one of his servants is ill-treated, and bids him depart; and he departs, telling Sacharissa that she is harder than an oak, and that she was certainly produced from a rock.[7]

There is one genuine reality in all this—sensuality; not ardent, but light and gay. There is a certain piece, "The Fall," which an abbé of the court of Louis XV might have written:

"Then blush not, Fair! or on him frown, . . .
How could the youth, alas! but bend
When his whole Heav'n upon him lean'd?
If aught by him amiss were done,
'Twas that he let you rise so soon." [8]

Other pieces smack of their surroundings, and are not so polished:

"Amoret! as sweet as good,
As the most delicious food,
Which but tasted does impart
Life and gladness to the heart." [9]

I should not be pleased, were I a woman, to be compared to a beef-steak, though that be appetizing; nor should I like any

[5] "The English Poets," ed. A. Chalmers, 21 vols. 1810; Waller, vol. viii. 44.
[6] Ibid.
[7] "While in this park I sing, the list'ning deer
Attend my passion, and forget to fear;
When to the beeches I report my flame,
They bow their heads, as if they felt the same.
To gods appealing, when I reach their bow'rs
With loud complaints, they answer me in showers.
To thee a wild and cruel soul is giv'n,
More deaf than trees, and prouder than the heav'n!
. . . . The rock,
That cloven rock, produc'd thee. . . .
This last complaint th' indulgent ears did pierce
Of just Apollo, president of verse;
Highly concerned that the Muse should bring
Damage to one whom he had taught to sing."—Ibid. pp. 44-45.
[8] Ibid. 32.
[9] Ibid. 45.

more to find myself, like Sacharissa, placed on a level with good wine, which flies to the head:

> " Sacharissa's beauty's wine,
> Which to madness doth incline;
> Such a liquor as no brain
> That is mortal can sustain." [10]

This is too much honor for port wine and meat. The English background crops up here and elsewhere; for example, the beautiful Sacharissa, having ceased to be beautiful, asked Waller if he would again write verses for her: he answered, " Yes, madame, when you are once more as young and as handsome as you were." Here is something to shock a Frenchman. Nevertheless Waller is usually amiable; a sort of brilliant light floats like a halo round his verses; he is always elegant, often graceful. His gracefulness is like the perfume exhaled from the world; fresh toilettes, ornamented drawing-rooms, the abundance and the pursuit of all those refined and delicate comforts give to the mind a sort of sweetness which is breathed forth in obliging compliments and smiles. Waller has many of these compliments and smiles, and those most flattering, *à propos* of a bud, a girdle, a rose. Such bouquets become his hands and his art. He pays an excellent compliment " To young Lady Lucy Sidney " on her age. And what could be more attractive for a frequenter of drawing-rooms, than this bud of still unopened youth, but which blushes already, and is on the point of expanding?

> " Yet, fairest blossom! do not slight
> That age which you may know so soon.
> The rosy morn resigns her light
> And milder glory to the noon." [11]

All his verses flow with a continuous harmony, clearness, facility, though his voice is never raised, or out of tune, or rough, nor loses its true accent, except by the worldling's affectation, which regularly changes all tones in order to soften them. His poetry resembles one of those pretty, affected, bedizened women, busy in inclining their heads on one side, and murmuring with a soft voice commonplace things which they can hardly be said to think, yet agreeable in their beribboned dresses, and who would please altogether if they did not dream of always pleasing.

[10] " The English Poets," Waller, viii. 45. [11] Ibid.

It is not that these men cannot handle grave subjects; but they handle them in their own fashion, without gravity or depth. What the courtier most lacks is the genuine sentiment of a true and original idea. That which interests him most is the correctness of the adornment, and the perfection of external form. They care little for the matter itself, much for the outward shape. In fact, it is form which they take for their subject in nearly all their serious poetry; they are critics, they lay down precepts, they compose Arts of Poetry. Denham in his "Preface to the Destruction of Troy" lays down rules for translating, whilst Roscommon teaches in a complete poem, an "Essay on Translated Verse," the art of translating poetry well. The Duke of Buckinghamshire versified an "Essay on Poetry" and an "Essay on Satire." Dryden is in the first rank of these pedagogues. Like Dryden again, they turn translators, amplifiers. Roscommon translated the "Ars Poetica" of Horace; Waller, the first act of "Pompée," a tragedy by Corneille; Denham some fragments of Homer and Vergil, and two poems, one "Of Prudence" and another "Of Justice." Rochester composed a satire against Mankind, in the style of Boileau, and also an epistle upon Nothing; the amorous Waller wrote a didactic poem on "The Fear of God," and another in six cantos on "Divine Love." These are exercises of style. They take a theological thesis, a commonplace subject of philosophy, a poetic maxim, and develop it in jointed prose, furnished with rhymes; invent nothing, feel little, and only aim at expressing good arguments in classical metaphors, in noble terms, after a conventional model. Most of their verses consist of two nouns, furnished with epithets, and connected by a verb, like college Latin verses. The epithet is good: they had to hunt through the Gradus for it, or, as Boileau wills it, they had to carry the line unfinished in their heads, and had to think about it an hour in the open air, until at last, at the corner of a wood, they found the right word which they could not hit upon before. I yawn, but applaud. After so much trouble a generation ends by forming the sustained style which is necessary to support, make public, and demonstrate grand things. Meanwhile, with their ornate, official diction, and their borrowed thought they are like formal chamberlains, in embroidered coats, present at a royal marriage or an imperial baptism, empty of head, grave in manner, admirable for dignity and bearing, with the punctilio and the ideas of a dummy.

Section V.—Sir John Denham

One of them only (Dryden always excepted) showed talent, Sir John Denham, Charles I's secretary. He was employed in public affairs, and after a dissolute youth, turned to serious habits; and leaving behind him satiric verse and party broad-jokes, attained in riper years a lofty oratorical style. His best poem, "Cooper's Hill," is the description of a hill and its surroundings, blended with the historical ideas which the sight recalls, and the moral reflections which its appearance naturally suggests. All these subjects are in accordance with the nobility and the limitation of the classical spirit, and display his vigor without betraying his weaknesses; the poet could show off his whole talent without forcing it. His fine language exhibits all its beauty, because it is sincere. We find pleasure in following the regular progress of those copious phrases in which his ideas, opposed or combined, attain for the first time their definite place and full clearness, where symmetry only brings out the argument more clearly, expansion only completes thought, antithesis and repetition do not induce trifling and affectation, where the music of verse, adding the breadth of sound to the fulness of sense, conducts the chain of ideas, without effort or disorder, by an appropriate measure to a becoming order and movement. Gratification is united with solidity; the author of "Cooper's Hill," knows how to please as well as to impress. His poem is like a king's park, dignified and level without doubt, but arranged to please the eye, and full of choice prospects. It leads us by easy digressions across a multitude of varied thoughts. It shows us here a mountain, yonder a memorial of the nymphs, a classic memorial, like a portico filled with statues, further on a broad stream, and by its side the ruins of an abbey; each page of the poem is like a distinct alley, with its distinct perspective. Further on, our thoughts are turned to the superstitions of the ignorant Middle Ages, and to the excesses of the recent revolution; then comes the picture of a royal hunt; we see the trembling stag make his retreat to some dark covert:

> "He calls to mind his strength, and then his speed,
> His winged heels, and then his armed head;
> With these t' avoid, with that his fate to meet;
> But fear prevails, and bids him trust his feet.

So fast he flies, that his reviewing eye
Has lost the chasers, and his ear the cry." [1]

These are the worthy spectacles and the studied diversity of the grounds of a nobleman. Every object, moreover, receives here, as in a king's palace, all the adornment which can be given to it; elegant epithets are introduced to embellish a feeble substantive, the decorations of art transform the commonplace of nature: vessels are "floating towers"; the Thames is "the most loved of all the Ocean's sons"; the airy mountain hides its proud head among the clouds, whilst a shady mantle clothes its sides. Among different kinds of ideas, there is one kingly, full of stately and magnificent ceremonies of self-contained and studied gestures, of correct yet commanding figures, uniform and imposing like the appointments of a palace; hence the classic writers, and Denham amongst them, draw all their poetic tints. From this every object and event takes its coloring, because constrained to come into contact with it. Here the object and events are compelled to traverse other things. Denham is not a mere courtier, he is an Englishman; that is, preoccupied by moral emotions. He often quits his landscape to enter into some grave reflection; politics, religion, disturb the enjoyment of his eyes; in reference to a hill or forest, he meditates upon man; externals lead him inward; impressions of the senses to contemplations of the soul. The men of this race are by nature and custom esoteric. When he sees the Thames throw itself into the sea, he compares it with "mortal life hasting to meet eternity." The "lofty forehead" of a mountain, beaten by storms, reminds him of "the common fate of all that's high or great." The course of the river suggests to him ideas of inner reformation:

"O could I flow like thee! and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear, though gentle yet not dull;
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing, full.

"But his proud head the airy mountain hides
Among the clouds; his shoulders and his sides
A shady mantle clothes; his curled brows
Frown on the gentle stream, which calmly flows;
While winds and storms his lofty forehead beat,
The common fate of all that's high or great." [2]

[1] "English Poets," vii. 237. [2] Ibid. 236-237.

There is in the English mind an indestructible store of moral instincts, and grand melancholy; and it is the greatest confirmation of this, that we can discover such a stock at the court of Charles II.

These are, however, but rare openings, and as it were croppings up of the original rock. The habits of the worldling are as a thick layer which cover it throughout. Manners, conversation, style, the stage, taste, all is French, or tries to be; they imitate France as well as they are able, and go there to mould themselves. Many cavaliers went there, driven away by Cromwell. Denham, Waller, Roscommon, and Rochester resided there; the Duchess of Newcastle, a poetess of the time, was married at Paris; the Duke of Buckinghamshire served for a short time under Turenne; Wycherley was sent to France by his father, who wished to rescue him from the contagion of Puritan opinions; Vanbrugh, one of the best comic playwrights, went thither to contract a polish. The two courts were allied almost always in fact, and always at heart, by a community of interests, and of religious and monarchical ideas. Charles II accepted from Louis XIV a pension, a mistress, counsels, and examples; the nobility followed their prince, and France was the model of the English court. Her literature and manners, the finest of the classic age, led the fashion. We perceive in English writings that French authors are their masters, and that they were in the hands of all well-educated people. They consulted Bossuet, translated Corneille, imitated Molière, respected Boileau. It went so far, that the greatest gallants of them tried to be altogether French, to mix some scraps of French in every phrase. "It is as ill-breeding now to speak good English," says Wycherley, "as to write good English, good sense, or a good hand." These Frenchified coxcombs [3] are compliment-mongers, always powdered, perfumed, "eminent for being *bien gantés*." They affect delicacy, they are fastidious; they find Englishmen coarse, gloomy, stiff; they try to be giddy and thoughtless; they giggle and prate at random, placing the reputation of man in the perfection of his wig and his bows. The theatre, which ridicules these imitators, is an imitator after their fashion. French comedy, like French politeness, becomes their model. They copy

[3] Etherege's "Sir Fopling Flutter"; Wycherley's "The Gentleman Dancing-master," i. 2.

both, altering without equalling them; for monarchical and classic France is, amongst all nations, the best fitted from its instincts and institutions for the modes of worldly life, and the works of an oratorical mind. England follows it in this course, being carried away by the universal current of the age, but at a distance, and drawn aside by its national peculiarities. It is this common direction and this particular deviation which the society and its poetry have proclaimed, and which the stage and its characters will display.

Section VI.—Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh and Farquhar

Four principal writers established this comedy—Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Farquhar:[1] the first gross, and in the pristine irruption of vice; the others more sedate, possessing more a taste for urbanity than debauchery; yet all men of the world, and priding themselves on their good breeding, on passing their days at court or in fine company, on having the tastes and bearing of gentlemen. "I am not a literary man," said Congreve to Voltaire, "I am a gentleman." In fact, as Pope said, he lived more like a man of quality than a man of letters, was noted for his successes with the fair, and passed his latter years in the house of the Duchess of Marlborough. I have said that Wycherley, under Charles II, was one of the most fashionable courtiers. He served in the army for some time, as did also Vanbrugh and Farquhar; nothing is more gallant than the name of Captain which they employed, the military stories they brought back, and the feather they stuck in their hats. They all wrote comedies on the same worldly and classical model, made up of probable incidents such as we observe around us every day, of well-bred characters such as we commonly meet in a drawing-room, correct and elegant conversations such as well-bred men can carry on. This theatre, wanting in poetry, fancy, and adventures, imitative and discursive, was formed at the same time as that of Molière, by the same causes, and on his model, so that in order to comprehend it we must compare it with that of Molière.

"Molière belongs to no nation," said a great English actor (Kemble); "one day the god of comedy, wishing to write, be-

[1] From 1672 to 1726.

came a man, and happened to fall into France." I accept this saying; but in becoming a man, he found himself, at the same time, a man of the seventeenth century and a Frenchman, and that is how he was the god of comedy. "To amuse respectable people," said Molière, "what a strange task!" Only the French art of the seventeenth century could succeed in that; for it consists in leading by an agreeable path to general notions; and the taste for these notions, as well as the custom of treading this path, is the peculiar mark of respectable people. Molière, like Racine, expands and creates. Open any one of his plays that comes to hand, and the first scene in it, chosen at random; after three replies you are carried away, or rather led away. The second continues the first, the third carries out the second, the fourth completes all; a current is created which bears us on, which bears us away, which does not release us until it is exhausted. There is no check, no digression, no episodes to distract our attention. To prevent the lapses of an absent mind, a secondary character intervenes, a lackey, a lady's maid, a wife, who, couplet by couplet, repeat in a different fashion the reply of the principal character, and by means of symmetry and contrast keep us in the path laid down. Arrived at the end, a second current seizes us and acts like the first. It is composed like the other, and with reference to the other. It throws it out by contrast, or strengthens it by resemblance. Here the valets repeat the dispute, then the reconciliation of their masters. In one place, Alceste, drawn in one direction through three pages, by anger, is drawn in a contrary direction, and through three pages, by love. Further on, tradesmen, professors, relatives, domestics, relieve each other scene after scene, in order to bring out in clearer light the pretentiousness and gullibility of M. Jourdain. Every scene, every act, brings out in greater relief, completes, or prepares another. Everything is united, and everything is simple; the action progresses, and progresses only to carry on the idea; there is no complication, no incidents. One comic event suffices for the story. A dozen conversations make up the play of the "Misanthrope." The same situation, five or six times renewed, is the whole of "L'Ecole des Femmes." These pieces are made out of nothing. They have no need of incidents, they find ample space in the compass of one room and one day, without surprises, without decoration, with

an arras and four arm-chairs. This paucity of matter throws out the ideas more clearly and quickly; in fact, their whole aim is to bring those ideas prominently forward; the simplicity of the subject, the progress of the action, the linking together of the scenes—to this everything tends. At every step clearness increases, the impression is deepened, vice stands out: ridicule is piled up, until, before so many apt and united appeals, laughter forces its way and breaks forth. And this laughter is not a mere outburst of physical amusement; it is the judgment which incites it. The writer is a philosopher, who brings us into contact with a universal truth by a particular example. We understand through him, as through La Bruyère or Nicole, the force of prejudice, the obstinacy of conventionality, the blindness of love. The couplets of his dialogue, like the arguments of their treatises, are but the worked-out proof and the logical justification of a preconceived conclusion. We philosophize with him on humanity; we think because he has thought. And he has only thought thus in the character of a Frenchman, for an audience of French men of the world. In him we taste a national pleasure. French refined and systematic intelligence, the most exact in seizing on the subordination of ideas, the most ready in separating ideas from matter, the most fond of clear and tangible ideas, find in him its nourishment and its echo. None who has sought to show us mankind, has led us by a straighter and easier mode to a more distinct and speaking portrait. I will add, to a more pleasing portrait—and this is the main talent of comedy: it consists in keeping back what is hateful; and observe that which is hateful abounds in the world. As soon as you will paint the world truly, philosophically, you meet with vice, injustice, and everywhere indignation; amusement flees before anger and morality. Consider the basis of Tartuffe; an obscene pedant, a red-faced hypocritical wretch, who, palming himself off on a decent and refined family, tries to drive the son away, marry the daughter, corrupt the wife, ruin and imprison the father, and almost succeeds in it, not by clever plots, but by vulgar mummery, and by the coarse audacity of his caddish disposition. What could be more repelling? And how is amusement to be drawn from such a subject, where Beaumarchais and La Bruyère failed?[2] Similarly,

[2] Onuphre, in La Bruyère's "Caractères," ch. xiii. de la Mode; Begears, in Beaumarchais's "La Mère Coupable."

in the "Misanthrope," is not the spectacle of a loyally sincere and honest man, very much in love, whom his virtue finally overwhelms with ridicule and drives from society, a sad sight to see? Rousseau was annoyed that it should produce laughter; and if we were to look upon the subject, not in Molière, but in itself, we should find enough to revolt our natural generosity. Recall his other plots; Georges Dandin mystified, Géronte beaten, Arnolphe duped, Harpagon plundered, Sganarelle married, girls seduced, louts thrashed, simpletons turned financiers. There are sorrows here, and deep ones; many would rather weep than laugh at them. Arnolphe, Dandin, Harpagon, are almost tragic characters; and when we see them in the world instead of the theatre, we are not disposed to sarcasm, but to pity. Picture to yourself the originals from whom Molière has taken his doctors. Consider this venturesome experimentalist, who, in the interest of science, tries a new saw, or inoculates a virus; think of his long nights at the hospital, the wan patient carried on a mattress to the operating-table, and stretching out his leg to the knife; or again imagine the peasant's bed of straw in the damp cottage, where an old dropsical mother lies choking,[3] while her children grudgingly count up the crowns she has already cost them. You quit such scenes deeply moved, filled with sympathy for human misery; you discover that life, seen near and face to face, is a mass of trivial harshnesses and grievous passions; you are tempted, if you wish to depict it, to enter into the mire of sorrows whereon Balzac and Shakespeare have built: you see in it no other poetry than that audacious reasoning power which from such a confusion abstracts the master-forces, or the light of genius which flickers over the swarm and the falls of so many polluted and wounded wretches. How everything changes under the hand of a mercurial Frenchman! how all this human ugliness is blotted out! how amusing is the spectacle which Molière has arranged for us! how we ought to thank the great artist for having transformed his subject so well! At last we have a cheerful world, on canvas at least; we could not have it otherwise, but this we have. How pleasant it is to forget truth! what an art is that which divests us of ourselves! what a point of view which converts the contortions of suffering into funny grimaces! Gayety has come upon us, the dearest possession of a

[3] Consultations of Sganarelle in the "Médecin Malgré Lui."

Frenchman. The soldiers of Villars used to dance that they might forget they had no longer any bread. Of all French possessions, too, it is the best. This gift does not destroy thought, but it masks it. In Molière, truth is at the bottom, but concealed; he has heard the sobs of human tragedy, but he prefers not to re-echo them. It is quite enough to feel our wounds smart; let us not go to the theatre to see them again. Philosophy, while it reveals them, advises us not to think of them too much. Let us enliven our condition with the gayety of easy conversation and light wit, as we would the chamber of sickness. Let us cover Tartuffe, Harpagon, the doctors, with outrageous ridicule: ridicule will make us forget their vices; they will afford us amusement instead of causing horror. Let Alceste be grumpy and awkward. It is in the first place true, because our more valiant virtues are only the outbreaks of a temper out of harmony with circumstances; but, in addition, it will be amusing. His mishaps will cease to make him the martyr of justice; they will only be the consequences of a cross-grained character. As to the mystifications of husbands, tutors, and fathers, I fancy that we are not to see in them a concerted attack on society or morality. We are only entertaining ourselves for one evening, nothing more. The syringes and thrashings, the masquerades and dances, prove that it is a sheer piece of buffoonery. Do not be afraid that philosophy will perish in a pantomime; it is present even in the "Mariage Forcé," even in the "Malade Imaginaire." It is the mark of a Frenchman and a man of the world to clothe everything, even that which is serious, in laughter. When he is thinking, he does not always wish to show it. In his most violent moments he is still the master of the house, the polite host; he conceals from you his thoughts or his suffering. Mirabeau, when in agony, said to one of his friends with a smile, "Come, you who take an interest in plucky deaths, you shall see mine!" The French talk in this style when they are depicting life; no other nation knows how to philosophize smartly, and die with good taste.

This is the reason why in no other nation comedy, while it continues comic, affords a moral; Molière is the only man who gives us models without getting pedantic, without trenching on the tragic, without growing solemn. This model is the "respectable man," as the phrase was, Philinte, Ariste, Clitandre,

Éraste;[4] there is no other who can at the same time instruct and amuse us. His talent has reflection for its basis, but it is cultivated by the world. His character has honesty for its basis, but it is in harmony with the world. You may imitate him without transgressing either reason or duty; he is neither a coxcomb nor a roisterer. You can imitate him without neglecting your interests or making yourself ridiculous; he is neither an ignoramus nor unmannerly. He has read and understands the jargon of Trissotin and Lycidas, but in order to pierce them through and through, to beat them with their own arguments, to set the gallery in a roar at their expense. He will discuss even morality and religion, but in a style so natural, with proofs so clear, with warmth so genuine, that he interests women, and is listened to by men of the world. He knows man, and reasons about him, but in such brief sentences, such living delineations, such pungent humor, that his philosophy is the best of entertainments. He is faithful to his ruined mistress, his calumniated friend, but gracefully, without fuss. All his actions, even noble ones, have an easy way about them which adorns them; he does nothing without pleasantness. His great talent is knowledge of the world; he shows it not only in the trivial circumstances of everyday life, but in the most passionate scenes, the most embarrassing positions. A noble swordsman wants to take Philinte, the "respectable man," as his second in a duel; he reflects a moment, excuses himself in a score of phrases, and "without playing the Hector," leaves the bystanders convinced that he is no coward. Armande insults him, then throws herself in his arms; he politely averts the storm, declines the reconciliation with the most loyal frankness, and without employing a single falsehood, leaves the spectators convinced that he is no boor. When he loves Éliante,[5] who prefers Alceste, and whom Alceste may possibly marry, he proposes to her with a complete delicacy and dignity, without lowering himself, without recrimination, without wronging himself or his friend. When Oronte reads him a sonnet, he does not assume in the fop a nature which he has not, but praises the conventional verses in conventional language, and is not so clumsy as to display a poetical judgment which would be out of place. He takes at once his tone from the cir-

[4] Amongst women, Éliante, Henriette, Élise, Uranie, Élmire.

[5] Compare the admirable tact and coolness of Éliante, Henriette, and Elmire.

cumstances; he perceives instantly what he must say and what be silent about, in what degree and in what gradations, what exact expedient will reconcile truth and conventional propriety, how far he ought to go or where to take his stand, what faint line separates decorum from flattery, truth from awkwardness. On this narrow path he proceeds free from embarrassment or mistakes, never put out of his way by the shocks or changes of circumstance, never allowing the calm smile of politeness to quit his lips, never omitting to receive with a laugh of good humor the nonsense of his neighbor. This cleverness, entirely French, reconciles in him fundamental honesty and worldly breeding; without it, he would be altogether on the one side or the other. In his way comedy finds its hero half-way between the *roué* and the preacher.

Such a theatre depicts a race and an age. This mixture of solidity and elegance belongs to the seventeenth century, and belongs to France. The world does not deprave, it develops Frenchmen; it polished then not only their manners and their homes, but also their sentiments and ideas. Conversation provoked thought; it was no mere talk, but an inquiry; with the exchange of news, it called forth the interchange of reflections. Theology and philosophy entered into it; morals, and the observation of the heart, formed its daily pabulum. Science kept up its vitality, and lost only its aridity. Pleasantness cloaked reason, but did not smother it. Frenchmen never think better than in society; the play of features excites them; their ready ideas flash into lightning, in their shock with the ideas of others. The varied current of conversation suits their fits and starts; the frequent change of subject fosters their invention; the pungency of piquant speeches reduces truth to small but precious coin, suitable to the lightness of their hands. And the heart is no more tainted by it than the intelligence. The Frenchman is of a sober temperament, with little taste for the brutishness of the drunkard, for violent joviality, for the riot of loose suppers; he is moreover gentle, obliging, always ready to please; in order to set him at ease he needs that flow of good-will and elegance which polite society creates and cherishes. And in accordance therewith, he shapes his temperate and amiable inclinations into maxims; it is a point of honor with him to be serviceable and refined. Such is the gentleman, the product of society in a

sociable race. It was not so with the English. Their ideas do not spring up in chance conversation, but by the concentration of solitary thought; this is the reason why ideas were then wanting. Their gentlemanly feelings are not the fruit of sociable instincts, but of personal reflection; that is why gentlemanly feelings were then at a discount. The brutish foundation remained; the outside alone was smooth. Manners were gentle, sentiments harsh; speech was studied, ideas frivolous. Thought and refinement of soul were rare, talent and fluent wit abundant. There was politeness of manner, not of heart; they had only the set rules and the conventionalities of life, its giddiness and heedlessness.

Section VII.—Superficiality of English Comedy

The English comedy-writers paint these vices, and possess them. Their talent and their stage are tainted by them. Art and philosophy are absent. The authors do not advance upon a general idea, and they do not proceed by the most direct method. They put together ill, and are embarrassed by materials. Their pieces have generally two intermingled plots, manifestly distinct,[1] combined in order to multiply incidents, and because the public demands a multitude of characters and facts. A strong current of boisterous action is necessary to stir up their dense appreciation; they do as the Romans did, who packed several Greek plays into one. They grew tired of the French simplicity of action, because they had not the French refined taste. The two series of actions mingle and jostle one with another. We cannot see where we are going; every moment we are turned out of our path. The scenes are ill connected; they change twenty times from place to place. When one scene begins to develop itself, a deluge of incidents interrupts. An irrelevant dialogue drags on between the incidents, suggesting a book with the notes introduced promiscuously into the text. There is no plan carefully conceived and rigorously carried out; they took, as it were, a plan, and wrote out the scenes one after another, pretty much as they came into their head. Probability is not well cared for. There are poorly arranged disguises, ill

[1] Dryden boasts of this. With him, we always find a complete comedy grossly amalgamated with a complete tragedy.

simulated folly, mock marriages, and attacks by robbers worthy of the comic opera. In order to obtain a sequence of ideas and probability, we must set out from some general idea. The conception of avarice, hypocrisy, the education of women, ill-assorted marriages, arranges and binds together by its individual power incidents which are to reveal it. But in the English comedy we look in vain for such a conception. Congreve, Farquhar, Vanbrugh, are only men of wit, not thinkers. They skim the surface of things, but do not penetrate. They play with their characters. They aim at success, at amusement. They sketch caricatures, they spin out in lively fashion a vain and bantering conversation; they make answers clash with one another, fling forth paradoxes; their nimble fingers manipulate and juggle with the incidents in a hundred ingenious and unlooked-for ways. They have animation, they abound in gesture and repartee; the constant bustle of the stage and its lively spirit surround them with continual excitement. But the pleasure is only skin-deep; we have seen nothing of the eternal foundation and the real nature of mankind; we carry no thought away; we have passed an hour, and that is all; the amusement teaches us nothing, and serves only to fill up the evenings of coquettes and coxcombs.

Moreover, this pleasure is not real; it has no resemblance to the hearty laugh of Molière. In English comedy there is always an undercurrent of tartness. We have seen this, and more, in Wycherley; the others, though less cruel, joke sourly. Their characters in a joke say harsh things to one another; they amuse themselves by hurting each other; a Frenchman is pained to hear this interchange of mock politeness; he does not go to blows by way of fun. Their dialogue turns naturally to virulent satire; instead of covering vice, it makes it prominent; instead of making it ridiculous, it makes it odious:

"*Clarissa.* Prithee, tell me how you have passed the night? . . .
Araminta. Why, I have been studying all the ways my brain could produce to plague my husband.
Cl. No wonder indeed you look so fresh this morning, after the satisfaction of such pleasing ideas all night." [2]

These women are really wicked, and that too openly. Throughout vice is crude, pushed to extremes, served up with material

[2] Vanbrugh, "Confederacy," ii. 1.

adjuncts. Lady Fidget says: "Our virtue is like the statesman's religion, the Quaker's word, the gamester's oath, and the great man's honour; but to cheat those that trust us."[3] Or again: "If you'll consult the widows of this town," says a young lady who does not wish to marry again, "they'll tell you, you should never take a lease of a house you can hire for a quarter's warning."[4] Or again: "My heart cut a caper up to my mouth," says a young heir, "when I heard my father was shot through the head."[5] The gentlemen collar each other on the stage, treat the ladies roughly before spectators, contrive an adultery not far off between the wings. Base or ferocious parts abound. There are furies like Mrs. Loveit and Lady Touchwood. There are swine like Parson Bull and the go-between Coupler. Lady Touchwood wants to stab her lover on the stage.[6] Coupler, on the stage, uses gestures which recall the court of Henry III of France. Wretches like Fainall and Maskwell are unmitigated scoundrels, and their hatefulness is not even cloaked by the grotesque. Even honest women like Silvia and Mrs. Sullen are plunged into the most shocking situations. Nothing shocked the English public of those days; they had no real education, but only its varnish.

There is a forced connection between the mind of a writer, the world which surrounds him, and the characters which he produces; for it is from this world that he draws the materials out of which he composes them. The sentiments which he contemplates in others and feels himself are gradually arranged into characters; he can only invent after his given model and his acquired experience; and his charcters only manifest what he is, or abridge what he has seen. Two features are prominent in this world; they are prominent also on this stage. All the successful characters can be reduced to two classes—natural beings on the one part, and artificial on the other; the first with the coarseness and shamelessness of their primitive inclinations, the second with the frivolities and vices of worldly habits: the first uncultivated, their simplicity revealing nothing but their innate baseness; the second cultivated, their refinement instilling into

[3] Wycherley, "The Country Wife," v. 4.
[4] Vanbrugh, "Relapse," ii. end.
[5] Ibid.
[6] She says to Maskwell, her lover: "You want but leisure to invent fresh falsehood, and soothe me to a fond belief of all your fictions; but I will stab the lie that's forming in your heart, and save a sin, in pity to your soul."—Congreve, "Double Dealer," v. 17.

them nothing but a new corruption. And the talent of the writers is suited to the painting of these two groups: they possess the grand English faculty, which is the knowledge of exact detail and real sentiments; they see gestures, surroundings, dresses; they hear the sounds of voices, and they have the courage to exhibit them; they have inherited very little, and at a great distance, and in spite of themselves, still they have inherited from Shakespeare; they manipulate freely, and without any softening, the coarse harsh red color which alone can bring out the figures of their brutes. On the other hand, they have animation and a good style; they can express the thoughtless chatter, the frolicsome affectations, the inexhaustible and capricious abundance of drawing-room stupidities; they have as much liveliness as the maddest, and at the same time they speak as well as the best instructed; they can give the model of witty conversation; they have lightness of touch, brilliancy, and also facility, exactness, without which you cannot draw the portrait of a man of the world. They find naturally on their palette the strong colors which suit their barbarians, and the pretty tints which suit their exquisites.

Section VIII.—Natural Characters

First there is the blockhead, Squire Sullen, a low kind of sot, of whom his wife speaks in this fashion: "After his man and he had rolled about the room, like sick passengers in a storm, he comes flounce into bed, dead as a salmon into a fishmonger's basket; his feet cold as ice, his breath hot as a furnace, and his hands and his face as greasy as his flannel nightcap. O matrimony! He tosses up the clothes with a barbarous swing over his shoulders, disorders the whole economy of my bed, leaves me half naked, and my whole night's comfort is the tuneable serenade of that wakeful nightingale, his nose!"[1] Sir John Brute says: "What the plague did I marry her (his wife) for? I knew she did not like me; if she had, she would have lain with me."[2] He turns his drawing-room into a stable, smokes it foul to drive the women away, throws his pipe at their heads, drinks, swears, and curses. Coarse words and oaths flow through his conversation like filth through a gutter. He gets drunk at the tavern,

[1] Farquhar, "The Beaux Stratagem," ii. 1.
[2] Vanbrugh, "Provoked Wife," v. 6.

and howls out, "Damn morality! and damn the watch! and let the constable be married." [3] He cries out that he is a free-born Englishman; he wants to go out and break everything. He leaves the inn with other besotted scamps, and attacks the women in the street. He robs a tailor who was carrying a doctor's gown, puts it on, thrashes the guard. He is seized and taken by the constable; on the road he breaks out into abuse, and ends by proposing to him, amid the hiccoughs and stupid reiterations of a drunken man, to go and find out somewhere a bottle and a girl. He returns home at last, covered with blood and mud, growling like a dog, with red swollen eyes, calling his wife a slut and a liar. He goes to her, forcibly embraces her, and as she turns away, cries, "I see it goes damnably against your stomach—and therefore—kiss me again. *(Kisses and tumbles her.)* So, now you being as dirty and as nasty as myself, we may go pig together." [4] He wants to get a cup of cold tea out of the closet, kicks open the door, discovers his wife's and niece's gallants. He storms, raves madly with his clammy tongue, then suddenly falls asleep. His valet comes and takes the insensible burden on his shoulders.[5] It is the portrait of a mere animal, and I fancy it is not a nice one.

That is the husband; let us look at the father, Sir Tunbelly Clumsey, a country gentleman, elegant, if any of them were. Tom Fashion knocks at the door of the mansion, which looks like "Noah's ark," and where they receive people as in a besieged city. A servant appears at a window with a blunderbuss in his hand, who is at last with great difficulty persuaded that he ought to let his master know that somebody wishes to see him. "Ralph, go thy weas, and ask Sir Tunbelly if he pleases to be waited upon. And dost hear? call to nurse that she may lock up Miss Hoyden before the geat's open." [6] Please to observe that in this house they keep a watch over the girls. Sir Tunbelly comes up with his people, armed with guns, pitchforks, scythes, and clubs, in no amiable mood, and wants to know the name of his visitor. "Till I know your name, I shall not ask you to come into my house; and when I know your name—'tis six to four I don't ask you neither." [7] He is like a watchdog growling

[3] Vanbrugh, "Provoked Wife," iii. 2.
[4] Ibid. v. 2.
[5] The valet Rasor says to his master: "Come to your kennel, you cuckoldy drunken sot you."—Ibid.
[6] Vanbrugh's "Relapse," iii. 2.
[7] Ibid.

and looking at the calves of an intruder. But he presently learns that this intruder is his future son-in-law; he utters some exclamations, and makes his excuses. "Cod's my life! I ask your lordship's pardon ten thousand times. *(To a servant.)* Here, run in a-doors quickly. Get a Scotch-coal fire in the great parlor; set all the Turkey-work chairs in their places; get the great brass candlesticks out, and be sure stick the sockets full of laurel. Run! . . . And do you hear, run away to nurse, bid her let Miss Hoyden loose again, and if it was not shifting-day, let her put on a clean tucker, quick!" [8] The pretended son-in-law wants to marry Hoyden straight off. "Not so soon neither! that's shooting my girl before you bid her stand! . . . Besides, my wench's wedding-gown is not come home yet." [9] The other suggests that a speedy marriage will save money. Spare money? says the father, "Udswoons, I'll give my wench a wedding dinner, though I go to grass with the king of Assyria for't. . . . Ah! poor girl, she'll be scared out of her wits on her wedding-night; for, honestly speaking, she does not know a man from a woman but by his beard and his breeches." [10] Foppington, the real son-in-law, arrives. Sir Tunbelly, taking him for an impostor, calls him a dog; Hoyden proposes to drag him in the horse-pond; they bind him hand and foot, and thrust him into the dog-kennel; Sir Tunbelly puts his fist under his nose and threatens to knock his teeth down his throat. Afterwards, having discovered the impostor, he says, "My lord, will you cut his throat? or shall I? . . . Here, give me my dog-whip. . . . Here, here, here, let me beat out his brains, and that will decide all." [11] He raves, and wants to fall upon Tom Fashion with his fists. Such is the country gentleman, of high birth and a farmer, boxer and drinker, brawler and beast. There steam up from all these scenes a smell of cooking, the noise of riot, the odor of a dunghill.

Like father like child. What a candid creature is Miss Hoyden! She grumbles to herself, "It's well I have a husband a-coming, or, ecod, I'd marry the baker; I would so! Nobody can knock at the gate, but presently I must be locked up; and here's the young greyhound bitch can run loose about the house all the day long, she can; 'tis very well." [12] When the nurse

[8] Vanbrugh's "Relapse," iii. 2.
[9] Ibid. iii. 5.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid. v. 5.
[12] Ibid. iii. 4.

tells her her future husband has arrived, she leaps for joy, and kisses the old woman. "O Lord! I'll go put on my laced smock, though I'm whipped till the blood run down my heels for't." [13] Tom comes himself, and asks her if she will be his wife. "Sir, I never disobey my father in anything but eating of green gooseberries." "But your father wants to wait a whole week." "A week!—Why I shall be an old woman by that time." [14] I cannot give all her answers. There is the spirit of a goat behind her kitchen-talk. She marries Tom secretly on the spot, and the chaplain wishes them many children. "Ecod," she says, "with all my heart! the more the merrier, I say; ha! nurse!" [15] But Lord Foppington, her real intended, turns up, and Tom makes off. Instantly her plan is formed. She bids the nurse and chaplain hold their tongues. "If you two will be sure to hold your tongues, and not say a word of what's past, I'll e'en marry this lord too." "What," says nurse, "two husbands, my dear?" "Why, you had three, good nurse, you may hold your tongue." [16] She nevertheless takes a dislike to the lord, and very soon; he is not well made, he hardly gives her any pocket-money; she hesitates between the two. "If I leave my lord, I must leave my lady too; and when I rattle about the streets in my coach, they'll only say, There goes mistress—mistress—mistress what? What's this man's name I have married, nurse?" "Squire Fashion." "Squire Fashion is it?—Well, 'Squire,' that's better than nothing.[17] . . . Love him! why do you think I love him, nurse? ecod, I would not care if he were hanged, so I were but once married to him!—No—that which pleases me, is to think what work I'll make when I get to London; for when I am a wife and a lady both, nurse, ecod, I'll flaunt it with the best of 'em." [18] But she is cautious all the same. She knows that her father has his dog's whip handy, and that he will give her a good shake. "But, d'ye hear?" she says to the nurse. "Pray take care of one thing: when the business comes to break out, be sure you get between me and my father,

[13] Vanbrugh's "Relapse," iii. 4.
[14] Ibid. iv. 1.
[15] Ibid. iv. 4. The character of the nurse is excellent. Tom Fashion thanks her for the training she has given Hoyden: "Alas, all I can boast of is, I gave her pure good milk, and so your honour would have said, an you had seen how the poor thing sucked it.—Eh! God's blessing on the sweet face on't! how it used to hang at this poor teat, and suck and squeeze, and kick and sprawl it would, till the belly on't was so full, it would drop off like a leech." This is good, even after Juliet's nurse in Shakespeare.
[16] Vanbrugh's "Relapse," iv. 6.
[17] Ibid. v. 5.
[18] Ibid. iv. 1.

for you know his tricks: he'll knock me down." [19] Here is your true moral ascendancy. For such a character, there is no other, and Sir Tunbelly does well to keep her tied up, and to let her taste a discipline of daily stripes.[20]

Section IX.—Artificial Characters

Let us accompany this modest character to town, and place her with her equals in fine society. All these artless ladies do wonders there, both in the way of actions and maxims. Wycherley's "Country Wife" gives us the tone. When one of them happens to be partly honest,[1] she has the manners and the boldness of a hussar in petticoats. Others seem born with the souls of courtesans and procuresses. "If I marry my Lord Aimwell," says Dorinda, "there will be title, place, and precedence, the Park, the play, and the drawing-room, splendor, equipage, noise and flambeaux. Hey, my Lady Aimwell's servants there! Lights, lights to the stairs! My Lady Aimwell's coach put forward! Stand by, make room for her ladyship!—Are not these things moving?" [2] She is candid, and so are others—Corinna, Miss Betty, Belinda, for example. Belinda says to her aunt, whose virtue is tottering: "The sooner you capitulate the better." [3] Further on, when she has decided to marry Heartfree, to save her aunt who is compromised, she makes a confession of faith which promises well for the future of her new spouse: "Were't not for your affair in the balance, I should go near to pick up some odious man of quality yet, and only take poor Heartfree for a gallant." [4] These young ladies are clever, and in all cases apt to follow good instruction. Listen to Miss Prue: "Look you here, madam, then, what Mr. Tattle has given me. Look you here, cousin, here's a snuff-box: nay, there's snuff in't;—here, will you have any?—Oh, good! how sweet it is!—Mr. Tattle is all over sweet; his peruke is sweet, and his gloves are sweet, and his handkerchief is sweet, pure sweet, sweeter than roses. Smell him, mother, madam, I mean. He gave me this ring for a kiss. . . . Smell, cousin; he says, he'll give

[19] Vanbrugh's "Relapse," v. 5.

[20] See also the character of a young stupid blockhead, Squire Humphrey. (Vanbrugh's "Journey to London.") He has only a single idea, to be always eating.

[1] Wycherley's Hippolita; Farquhar's Silvia.

[2] Farquhar's "Beaux Stratagem," iv. 1.

[3] Vanbrugh's "Provoked Wife," iii. 3.

[4] Ibid. v. 2.

me something that will make my smocks smell this way. Is not it pure?—It's better than lavender, mun. I'm resolved I won't let nurse put any more lavender among my smocks—ha, cousin?" [5] It is the silly chatter of a young magpie, who flies for the first time. Tattle, alone with her, tells her he is going to make love:

"*Miss Prue.* Well; and how will you make love to me? come, I long to have you begin. Must I make love too? you must tell me how.

Tattle. You must let me speak, miss, you must not speak first; I must ask you questions, and you must answer.

Miss P. What, is it like the catechism?—come then, ask me.

T. D'ye think you can love me?

Miss P. Yes.

T. Pooh! pox! you must not say yes already; I shan't care a farthing for you then in a twinkling.

Miss P. What must I say then?

T. Why, you must say no, or you believe not, or you can't tell.

Miss P. Why, must I tell a lie then?

T. Yes, if you'd be well-bred; all well-bred persons lie. Besides, you are a woman, you must never speak what you think: your words must contradict your thoughts; but your actions may contradict your words. So, when I ask you, if you can love me, you must say no, but you must love me too. If I tell you you are handsome, you must deny it, and say I flatter you. But you must think yourself more charming than I speak you: and like me, for the beauty which I say you have, as much as if I had it myself. If I ask you to kiss me, you must be angry, but you must not refuse me. . . .

Miss P. O Lord, I swear this is pure!—I like it better than our old-fashioned country way of speaking one's mind;—and must not you lie too?

T. Hum!—Yes; but you must believe I speak truth.

Miss P. O Gemini! well, I always had a great mind to tell lies; but they frighted me, and said it was a sin.

T. Well, my pretty creature; will you make me happy by giving me a kiss?

Miss P. No, indeed; I'm angry at you. (*Runs and kisses him.*)

T. Hold, hold, that's pretty well:—but you should not have given it me, but have suffered me to have taken it.

Miss P. Well, we'll do it again.

T. With all my heart. Now, then, my little angel. (*Kisses her.*)

Miss P. Pish!

T. That's right—again, my charmer! (*Kisses again.*)

Miss P. O fy! nay, now I can't abide you.

T. Admirable! that was as well as if you had been born and bred in Covent Garden." [6]

[5] Congreve's "Love for Love," ii. 10. [6] Ibid. 11.

She makes such rapid progress that we must stop the quotation forthwith. And mark, what is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh. All these charming characters soon employ the language of kitchen-maids. When Ben, the dolt of a sailor, wants to make love to Miss Prue, she sends him off with a flea in his ear, raves, lets loose a string of cries and coarse expressions, calls him a "great sea-calf." "What does father mean," he says, "to leave me alone, as soon as I come home, with such a dirty dowdy? Sea-calf! I an't calf enough to lick your chalked face, you cheese-curd, you." Moved by these amenities, she breaks out into a rage, weeps, calls him a "stinking tar-barrel." [7] People come and put a stop to this first essay at gallantry. She fires up, declares she will marry Tattle, or the butler, if she cannot get a better man. Her father says, "Hussy, you shall have a rod." She answers, "A fiddle of a rod! I'll have a husband: and if you won't get me one, I'll get one for myself. I'll marry our Robin the butler.' [8] Here are pretty and prancing mares if you like; but decidedly, in these authors' hands, the natural man becomes nothing but a waif from the stable or the kennel.

Will you be better pleased by the educated man? The worldly life which they depict is a regular carnival, and the heads of their heroines are full of wild imaginations and unchecked gossip. You may see in Congreve how they chatter, with what a flow of words and affectations, with what a shrill and modulated voice, with what gestures, what twisting of arms and neck, what looks raised to heaven, what genteel airs, what grimaces. Lady Wishfort speaks:

"But art thou sure Sir Rowland will not fail to come? or will he not fail when he does come? Will he be importunate, Foible, and push? For if he should not be importunate, I shall never break decorums:—I shall die with confusion, if I am forced to advance.—Oh no, I can never advance!—I shall swoon, if he should expect advances. No, I hope Sir Rowland is better bred than to put a lady to the necessity of

[7] Miss Prue: "Well, and there's a handsome gentleman, and a fine gentleman, and a sweet gentleman, that was here, that loves me, and I love him; and if he sees you speak to me any more, he'll thrash your jacket for you, he will; you great sea-calf."

Ben: "What! do you mean that fair-weather spark that was here just now? Will he thrash my jacket? Let'n, let'n, let'n—but an he comes near me, mayhap I may give him a salt-eel for's supper, for all that. What does father mean, to leave me alone, as soon as I come home with such a dirty dowdy? Sea-calf! I an't calf enough to lick your chalked face, you cheese-curd you."—Ibid. iii. 7.

[8] Congreve's "Love for Love," v. 6.

breaking her forms. I won't be too coy neither—I won't give him despair—but a little disdain is not amiss; a little scorn is alluring.

Foible. A little scorn becomes your ladyship.

Lady Wishfort. Yes, but tenderness becomes me best—a sort of dying-ness—you see that picture has a sort of a—ha, Foible! a swimmingness in the eye—yes, I'll look so—my niece affects it; but she wants features. Is Sir Rowland handsome? Let my toilet be removed—I'll dress above. I'll receive Sir Rowland here. Is he handsome? Don't answer me. I won't know: I'll be surprised, I'll be taken by surprise.[9] . . . And how do I look, Foible?

F. Most killing well, madam.

Lady W. Well, and how shall I receive him? in what figure shall I give his heart the first impression? . . . Shall I sit?—no, I won't sit—I'll walk—ay, I'll walk from the door upon his entrance; and then turn full upon him—no, that will be too sudden. I'll lie—ay, I'll lie down—I'll receive him in my little dressing-room; there's a couch—yes, yes, I'll give the first impression on a couch. I won't lie neither; but loll and lean upon one elbow: with one foot a little dangling off, jogging in a thoughtful way—yes—and then as soon as he appears, start, ay, start, and be surprised, and rise to meet him in a pretty disorder." [10]

These hesitations of a finished coquette become still more vehement at the critical moment. Lady Plyant thinks herself beloved by Mellefont, who does not love her at all, and tries in vain to undeceive her.

"*Mellefont.* For heaven's sake, madam.

Lady Plyant. O, name it no more!—Bless me, how can you talk of heaven! and have so much wickedness in your heart? May be you don't think it a sin.—They say some of you gentlemen don't think it a sin.—May be it is no sin to them that don't think it so; indeed, if I did not think it a sin—but still my honour, if it were no sin.—But then, to marry my daughter, for the conveniency of frequent opportunities, I'll never consent to that; as sure as can be I'll break the match.

Mel. Death and amazement.—Madam, upon my knees.

Lady P. Nay, nay, rise up; come, you shall see my good nature. I know love is powerful, and nobody can help his passion: 'tis not your fault; nor I swear it is not mine. How can I help it, if I have charms? and how can you help it if you are made a captive? I swear it is pity it should be a fault. But my honour—well, but your honour too—but the sin!—well, but the necessity—O Lord, here is somebody coming, I dare not stay. Well, you must consider of your crime; and strive as much as can be against it—strive, be sure—but don't be melancholic, don't despair.—But never think that I'll grant you anything; O Lord, no.—But be sure you lay aside all thoughts of the marriage: for though I know you don't love Cynthia, only as a blind to your passion for me, yet it will make me jealous.—O Lord, what did I say? jealous! no,

[9] Congreve, "The Way of the World," iii. 5. [10] Ibid. iv.

no; I can't be jealous, for I must not love you—therefore don't hope —but don't despair neither.—O, they're coming! I must fly." [11]

She escapes and we will not follow her.

This giddiness, this volubility, this pretty corruption, these reckless and affected airs, are collected in the most brilliant, the most worldly portrait of the stage we are discussing, that of Mrs. Millamant, " a fine lady," as the Dramatis Personæ say.[12] She enters, " with her fan spread and her streamers out," dragging a train of furbelows and ribbons, passing through a crowd of laced and bedizened fops, in splendid perukes, who flutter about her path, haughty and wanton, witty and scornful, toying with gallantries, petulant, with a horror of every grave word and all nobility of action, falling in only with change and pleasure. She laughs at the sermons of Mirabell, her suitor: " Sententious Mirabell!—Prithee don't look with that violent and inflexible wise face, like Solomon at the dividing of the child in an old tapestry-hanging.[13] . . . Ha! ha! ha!—pardon me, dear creature, though I grant you 'tis a little barbarous, ha! ha! ha! "[14]

She breaks out into laughter, then gets into a rage, then banters, then sings, then makes faces, and changes at every motion while we look at her. It is a regular whirlpool; all turns round in her brain as in a clock when the mainspring is broken. Nothing can be prettier than her fashion of entering on matrimony:

" *Millamant.* Ah! I'll never marry unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure! . . . My dear liberty, shall I leave thee? my faithful solitude, my darling contemplation, must I bid you then adieu? Ay—h—adieu—my morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent slumbers, all ye *douceurs* ye *sommeils du matin* adieu?—I can't do it; 'tis more than impossible—positively, Mirabell, I'll lie a-bed in a morning as long as I please.

Mirabell. Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I please.

Mill. Ah! idle creature, get up when you will—and d'ye hear, I won't be called names after I'm married; positively I won't be called names.

Mir. Names!

Mill. Ay, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweet heart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar—I shall never bear that—good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my Lady Fadler, and Sir Francis. . . . Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together; but let us be very strange and well-bred: let us be as strange

[11] Congreve, " The Double-dealer," ii. 5.

[12] Congreve, " The Way of the World."

[13] Ibid. ii. 6.

[14] Ibid. iii. 11.

as if we had been married a great while; and as well bred as if we were not married at all. . . .

Mir. Shall I kiss your hand upon the contract? [15]

Mill. Fainall, what shall I do? shall I have him? I think I must have him.

Fainall. Ay, ay, take him. What should you do?

Mill. Well then—I'll take my death I'm in a horrid fright—Fainall, I shall never say it—well—I think—I'll endure you.

Fain. Fy! fy! have him, have him, and tell him so in plain terms: for I am sure you have a mind to him.

Mill. Are you? I think I have—and the horrid man looks as if he thought so too—well, you ridiculous thing you, I'll have you—I won't be kissed, nor I won't be thanked—here kiss my hand, though.—So, hold your tongue now, don't say a word." [16]

The agreement is complete. I should like to see one more article to it—a divorce "*a mensâ et thoro*": this would be the genuine marriage of the worldlings, that is a decent divorce. And I am sure that in two years Mirabell and Millamant will come to this. Hither tends the whole of this theatre; for, with regard to the women, but particularly with regard to the married women, I have only presented their most amiable aspects. Deeper down it is all gloomy, bitter, above all, pernicious. It represents a household as a prison, marriage as a warfare, woman as a rebel, adultery as the result looked for, irregularity as a right, extravagance as pleasure.[1] A woman of fashion goes to bed in the morning, rises at mid-day, curses her husband, listens to obscenities, frequents balls, haunts the plays, ruins reputations, turns her home into a gambling-house, borrows money, allures men, associates her honor and fortune with debts and assignations. "We are as wicked (as men)," says Lady Brute, "but our vices lie another way. Men have more courage than we, so they commit more bold, impudent sins. They quarrel,

[15] Congreve, "The Way of the World," iv. 5.

[16] Ibid. iv. 6.

[17] Amanda: "How did you live together?" Berinthia: "Like man and wife, asunder.—He loved the country, I the town. He hawks and hounds, I coaches and equipage. He eating and drinking, I carding and playing. He the sound of a horn, I the squeak of a fiddle. We were dull company at table, worse a-bed. Whenever we met, we gave one another the spleen; and never agreed but once, which was about lying alone."—Vanbrugh, "Relapse," Act ii. ad fin.

Compare Vanbrugh, "A Journey to London." Rarely has the repulsiveness and corruption of the brutish or worldly nature been more vividly displayed. Little Betty and her brother, Squire Humphrey, deserve hanging.

Again. Mrs. Foresight: "Do you think any woman honest?" Scandal: "Yes, several very honest; they'll cheat a little at cards, sometimes; but that's nothing." Mrs. F.: "Pshaw! but virtuous, I mean." S.: "Yes, faith; I believe some women are virtuous too; but 'tis as I believe some men are valiant, through fear. For why should a man court danger or a woman shun pleasure?"—Congreve, "Love for Love," iii. 14.

fight, swear, drink, blaspheme, and the like; whereas we being cowards, only backbite, tell lies, cheat at cards, and so forth." [2] An admirable résumé, in which the gentlemen are included and the ladies too! The world has done nothing but provide them with correct phrases and elegant dresses. In Congreve especially they talk in the best style; above all they know how to hand ladies about and entertain them with news; they are expert in the fence of retorts and replies; they are never out of countenance, find means to make the most ticklish notions understood; they discuss very well, speak excellently, make their bow still better; but to sum up, they are blackguards, systematical epicureans, professed seducers. They set forth immorality in maxims, and reason out their vice. "Give me," says one, "a man that keeps his five senses keen and bright as his sword, that has 'em always drawn out in their just order and strength, with his reason, as commander at the head of 'em, that detaches 'em by turns upon whatever party of pleasure agreeably offers, and commands 'em to retreat upon the least appearance of disadvantage or danger. . . . I love a fine house, but let another keep it; and just so I love a fine woman." [19] One deliberately seduces his friend's wife; another under a false name gets possession of his brother's intended. A third hires false witnesses to secure a dowry. I must ask the reader to consult for himself the fine stratagems of Worthy, Mirabell, and others. They are cold-blooded rascals who forge, commit adultery, swindle, as if they had done nothing else all their lives. They are represented here as men of fashion; they are theatrical lovers, heroes, and as such they manage to get hold of an heiress. We must go to Mirabell for an example of this medley of corruption and elegance. Mrs. Fainall, his former mistress, married by him to a common friend, a miserable wretch, complains to him of this hateful marriage. He appeases her, gives her advice, shows her the precise mode, the true expedient for setting things on a comfortable footing. "You should have just so much disgust for your husband, as may be sufficient to make you relish your lover." She cries in despair, "Why did you make me marry

[18] Vanbrugh, "Provoked Wife," v. 2. Compare also in this piece the character of Mademoiselle, the French chambermaid. They represent French vice as evenemore shameless than English vice.

[19] Farquhar's "The Beaux Stratagem," i. 1; and in the same piece here is the catechism of love: "What are the objects of that passion?—youth, beauty, and clean linen." And from the "Mock Astrologer" of Dryden: "As I am a gentleman, a man about town, one that wears good clothes, eats, drinks, and wenches sufficiently."

this man?" He smiles calmly, "Why do we daily commit disagreeable and dangerous actions? to save that idol, reputation." How tender is this argument! How can a man better console a woman whom he has plunged into bitter unhappiness! What a touching logic in the insinuation which follows: "If the familiarities of our loves had produced that consequence of which you were apprehensive, where could you have fixed a father's name with credit, but on a husband?" He continues his reasoning in an excellent style; listen to the dilemma of a man of feeling: "A better man ought not to have been sacrificed to the occasion; a worse had not answered to the purpose. When you are weary of him, you know your remedy."[20] Thus are a woman's feelings to be considered, especially a woman whom we have loved. To cap all, this delicate conversation is meant to force the poor deserted Mrs. Fainall into a low intrigue which shall obtain for Mirabell a pretty wife and a good dowry. Certainly this gentleman knows the world; no one could better employ a former mistress. Such are the cultivated characters of this theatre, as dishonest as the uncultivated ones: having transformed their evil instincts into systematic vices, lust into debauchery, brutality into cynicism, perversity into depravity, deliberate egotists, calculating sensualists, with rules for their immorality, reducing feeling to self-interest, honor to decorum, happiness to pleasure.

The English Restoration altogether was one of those great crises which, while warping the development of a society and a literature, show the inward spirit which they modify, but which contradicts them. Society did not lack vigor, nor literature talent; men of the world were polished, writers inventive. There was a court, drawing-rooms, conversation, worldly life, a taste for letters, the example of France, peace, leisure, the influence of the sciences, of politics, of theology—in short, all the happy circumstances which can elevate the mind and civilize manners. There was the vigorous satire of Wycherley, the sparkling dialogue and delicate raillery of Congreve, the frank nature and animation of Vanbrugh, the manifold invention of Farquhar, in short, all the resources which might nourish the comic element, and offer a genuine theatre to the best constructions of human intelligence. Nothing came to a head; all was abortive. Their age left nothing behind but the memory of corruption; their

[20] Congreve, "The Way of the World," ii. 4.

comedy remains a repertory of viciousness; society had only a soiled elegance, literature a frigid wit. Their manners are gross and trivial; their ideas are futile or incomplete. Through disgust and reaction, a revolution was at hand in literary feeling and moral habits, as well as in general beliefs and political institutions. Man was to change altogether, and to turn completely round at once. The same repugnance and the same experience were to detach him from every aspect of his old condition. The Englishman discovered that he was not monarchical, Papistical, nor sceptical, but liberal, Protestant, and a believer. He came to understand that he was not a roisterer nor a worldling, but reflective and introspective. He possesses a current of animal life too violent to suffer him without danger to abandon himself to enjoyment; he needs a barrier of moral reasoning to repress his outbreaks. There is in him a current of attention and will too strong to suffer himself to rest content with trifles; he needs some weighty and serviceable labor on which to expend his power. He needs a barrier and an employment. He needs a constitution and a religion which shall restrain him by duties which must be performed, and which shall occupy him by rights which must be defended. He is content only in a serious and orderly life; there he finds the natural groove and the necessary outlet for his faculties and his passions. From this time he enters upon it, and this theatre itself exhibits the impress of it. It undoes and transforms itself. Collier threw discredit upon it; Addison condemned it. National sentiment awoke on the stage; French manners are jeered at; the prologues celebrate the defeats of Louis XIV; the license, elegance, religion of his court, are presented under a ridiculous or odious light.[21] Immorality gradually diminishes, marriage is more respected, the heroines go no further than to the verge of adultery;[22] the roisterers are pulled up at the critical moment; one of them suddenly declares himself purified, and speaks in verse, the better to mark his enthusiasm; another praises marriage;[23] some aspire in the fifth act to an orderly life. We shall soon see Steele writing a moral

[21] The part of Chaplain Foigard in Farquhar's "Beaux Stratagem"; of Mademoiselle, and generally of all the French people.

[22] The part of Amanda in Vanbrugh's "Relapse"; of Mrs. Sullen; the conversion of two roisterers, in the "Beaux Stratagem."

[23] "Though marriage be a lottery in which there are a wondrous many blanks, yet there is one inestimable lot, in which the only heaven upon earth is written."

"To be capable of loving one, doubtless, is better than to possess a thousand."—Vanbrugh.

treatise called " The Christian Hero." Henceforth comedy declines and literary talent flows into another channel. Essay, novel, pamphlet, dissertation, take the place of the drama; and the English classical spirit, abandoning the kinds of writing which are foreign to its nature, enters upon the great works which are destined to immortalize it and give it expression.

Section X.—Sheridan.—Decadence of the Theatre

Nevertheless, in this continuous decline of dramatic invention, and in the great change of literary vitality, some shoots strike out at distant intervals towards comedy; for mankind always seeks for entertainment, and the theatre is always a place of entertainment. The tree once planted grows, feebly no doubt, with long intervals of almost total dryness and almost constant barrenness, yet subject to imperfect renewals of life, to transitory partial blossomings, sometimes to an inferior fruitage bursting forth from the lowest branches. Even when the great subjects are worn out, there is still room here and there for a happy idea. Let a wit, clever and experienced, take it in hand, he will catch up a few oddities on his way, he will introduce on the scene some vice or fault of his time; the public will come in crowds and ask no better than to recognize itself and laugh. There was one of these successes when Gay, in the " Beggars' Opera " brought out the rascaldom of the great world, and avenged the public on Walpole and the court; another, when Goldsmith, inventing a series of mistakes, led his hero and his audience through five acts of blunders.[1] After all, if true comedy can only exist in certain ages, ordinary comedy can exist in any age. It is too akin to the pamphlet, novels, satire, not to raise itself occasionally by its propinquity. If I have an enemy, instead of attacking him in a brochure, I can take my fling at him on the stage. If I am capable of painting a character in a story, I am not far from having the talent to bring out the pith of this same character in a few turns of a dialogue. If I can quietly ridicule a vice in a copy of verses, I shall easily arrive at making this vice speak out from the mouth of an actor. At least I shall be tempted to try it; I shall be seduced by the wonderful *éclat* which the footlights,

[1] " She Stoops to Conquer."

declamation, scenery give to an idea; I shall try and bring my own into this strong light; I shall go in for it even when it is necessary that my talent be a little or a good deal forced for the occasion. If need be, I shall delude myself, substitute expedients for artless originality and true comic genius. If on a few points I am inferior to the great masters, on some, it may be, I surpass them; I can work up my style, refine upon it, discover happier words, more striking jokes, a brisker exchange of brilliant repartees, newer images, more picturesque comparisons; I can take from this one a character, from the other a situation, borrow of a neighboring nation, out of old plays, good novels, biting pamphlets, polished satires, and petty newspapers; I can accumulate effects, serve up to the public a stronger and more appetizing stew; above all, I can perfect my machine, oil the wheels, plan the surprises, the stage effects, the see-saw of the plot, like a consummate playwright. The art of constructing plays is as capable of development as the art of clock-making. The farce-writer of to-day sees that the catastrophe of half of Molière's plays is ridiculous; nay, many of them can produce catastrophes better than Molière; in the long run, they succeed in stripping the theatre of all awkwardness and circumlocution. A piquant style, and perfect machinery; pungency in all the words, and animation in all the scenes; a superabundance of wit, and marvels of ingenuity; over all this, a true physical activity, and the secret pleasure of depicting and justifying one's self, of public self-glorification: here is the foundation of the "School for Scandal," here the source of the talent and the success of Sheridan.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan was the contemporary of Beaumarchais, and resembled him in his talent and in his life. The two epochs, the two dramatic schools, the two characters, correspond. Like Beaumarchais, he was a lucky adventurer, clever, amiable, and generous, reaching success through scandal, who flashed up in a moment, dazzled everybody, scaled with a rush the empyrean of politics and literature, settled himself, as it were, among the constellations, and, like a brilliant rocket, presently went out completely exhausted. Nothing failed him; he attained all at the first attempt, without apparent effort, like a prince who need only show himself to win his place. He took as his birthright everything that was most surpassing in

happiness, most brilliant in art, most exalted in worldly position. The poor unknown youth, the wretched translator of an unreadable Greek sophist, who at twenty walked about Bath in a red waistcoat and a cocked hat, destitute of hope, and ever conscious of the emptiness of his pockets, had gained the heart of the most admired beauty and musician of her time, had carried her off from ten rich, elegant, titled adorers, had fought with the best-hoaxed of the ten, beaten him, had carried by storm the curiosity and attention of the public. Then, challenging glory and wealth, he placed successively on the stage the most diverse and the most applauded dramas, comedies, farce, opera, serious verse; he bought and worked a large theatre without a farthing, inaugurated a reign of successes and pecuniary advantages, and led a life of elegance amid the enjoyments of social and domestic joys, surrounded by universal admiration and wonder. Thence, aspiring yet higher, he conquered power, entered the House of Commons, showed himself a match for the first orators, opposed Pitt, accused Warren Hastings, supported Fox, jeered at Burke; sustained with brilliancy, disinterestedness, and constancy, a most difficult and liberal part; became one of the three or four most noted men in England, an equal of the greatest lords, the friend of the Prince of Wales, in the end even Receiver-General of the Duchy of Cornwall, treasurer to the fleet. In every career he took the lead. As Byron said of him: "Whatsoever Sheridan has done or chosen to do has been, *par excellence*, always the best of its kind. He has written the best comedy ('The School for Scandal'), the best drama (in my mind far before that St. Giles lampoon 'The Beggars' Opera'), the best farce ('The Critic'—it is only too good for a farce), and the best address ('Monologue on Garrick'), and, to crown all, delivered the very best oration (the famous Begum Speech) ever conceived or heard in this country." [2]

All ordinary rules were reversed in his favor. He was forty-four years old, debts began to accumulate; he had supped and drunk to excess; his cheeks were purple, his nose red. In this state he met at the Duke of Devonshire's a charming young lady with whom he fell in love. At the first sight she exclaimed, "What an ugly man, a regular monster!" He spoke to her; she confessed that he was very ugly, but that he had a good deal

[2] The Works of Lord Byron, 18 vols. ed. Moore, 1832, ii. p. 303.

of wit. He spoke again, and again, and she found him very amiable. He spoke yet again, and she loved him, and resolved at all hazard to marry him. The father, a prudent man, wishing to end the affair, gave out that his future son-in-law must provide a dowry of fifteen thousand pounds; the fifteen thousand pounds were deposited as by magic in the hands of a banker; the young couple set off into the country; and Sheridan, meeting his son, a fine strapping fellow, not very satisfied with the marriage, persuaded him that it was the most sensible thing that a father could do, and the most fortunate event that a son could rejoice over. Whatever the business, whoever the man, he persuaded; none withstood him, everyone fell under his charm.

What is more difficult than for an ugly man to make a young girl forget his ugliness? There is one thing more difficult, and that is to make a creditor forget you owe him money. There is something more difficult still, and that is, to borrow money from a creditor who has come to dun you. One day one of his friends was arrested for debt; Sheridan sends for Mr. Henderson, the crabbed tradesman, coaxes him, interests him, moves him to tears, works upon his feelings, hedges him in with general considerations and lofty eloquence, so that Mr. Henderson offers his purse, actually wants to lend two hundred pounds, insists, and finally, to his great joy, obtains permission to lend it. No one was ever more amiable, quicker to win confidence than Sheridan; rarely has the sympathetic, affectionate, and fascinating character been more fully displayed; he was literally seductive. In the morning, creditors and visitors filled the rooms in which he lived; he came in smiling with an easy manner with so much loftiness and grace, that the people forgot their wants and their claims, and looked as if they had only come to see him. His animation was irresistible; no one had a more dazzling wit; he had an inexhaustible fund of puns, contrivances, sallies, novel ideas. Lord Byron, who was a good judge, said that he had never heard nor conceived of a more extraordinary power of conversation. Men spent nights in listening to him; no one equalled him during a supper; even when drunk he retained his wit. One morning he was picked up by the watch, and they asked him his name; he gravely answered, "Wilberforce." With strangers and inferiors he had no arro-

gance or stiffness; he possessed in an eminent degree that unreserved character which always exhibits itself complete, which holds back none of its light, which abandons and gives itself up; he wept when he received a sincere eulogy from Lord Byron, or in recounting his miseries as a plebeian parvenu. Nothing is more charming than this openness of heart; it at once sets people on a footing of peace and amity; men suddenly desert their defensive and cautious attitude; they perceive that a man is giving himself up to them, and they give themselves up to him; the outpouring of his innermost feelings invites the outpouring of theirs. A minute later, Sheridan's impetuous and sparkling individuality flashes out; his wit explodes, rattles like a discharge of fire-arms; he takes the conversation to himself, with a sustained brilliancy, a variety, an inexhaustible vigor, till five o'clock in the morning. Against such a necessity for launching out in unconsidered speech, of indulgence, of self-outpouring, a man had need be well on his guard; life cannot be passed like a holiday; it is a strife against others and against one's self; people must think of the future, mistrust themselves, make provision; there is no subsisting without the precaution of a shopkeeper, the calculation of a tradesman. If we sup too often, we will end by not having wherewithal to dine upon; when our pockets have holes in them, the shillings will fall out; nothing is more of a truism, but it is true. Sheridan's debts accumulated, his digestion failed. He lost his seat in Parliament, his theatre was burned; sheriff's officer succeeded sheriff's officer, and they had long been in possession of his house. At last, a bailiff arrested the dying man in his bed, and was for taking him off in his blankets; nor would he let him go until threatened with a lawsuit, the doctor having declared that the sick man would die on the road. A certain newspaper (the "Examiner") cried shame on the great lords who suffered such a man to end so miserably; they hastened to leave their cards at his door. In the funeral procession two brothers of the king, dukes, earls, bishops, the first men in England, carried or followed the body. A singular contrast, picturing in abstract all his talent, and all his life; lords at his funeral and bailiffs at his death-bed.

His theatre was in accordance with his life; all was brilliant, but the metal was not all his own, nor was it of the best quality. His comedies were comedies of society, the most amusing ever

written, but merely comedies of society. Imagine the exaggerated caricatures artists are wont to improvise, in the drawing-room of a house where they are intimate, about eleven o'clock in the evening. His first play, "The Rivals," and afterwards his "Duenna," and "The Critic," are filled with these, and scarce anything else. There is Mrs. Malaprop, a silly, pretentious woman, who uses grand words higgledy-piggledy, delighted with herself, in "a nice derangement of epitaphs" before her nouns, and declaring that her niece is "as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of the Nile." There is a Bob Acres, who suddenly becomes a hero, gets engaged in a duel, and being led on the ground, calculates the effect of the balls, thinks of his will, burial, embalmment, and wishes he were at home. There is another caricature in the person of a clumsy and cowardly servant, of an irascible and brawling father, of a sentimental and romantic young lady, of a touchy Irish duellist. All this jogs and jostles on, without much order, amid the surprises of a twofold plot, by aid of appliances and *rencontres*, without the full and regular control of a dominating idea. But in vain we perceive it is a patchwork; the high spirit carries off everything: we laugh heartily; every single scene has its facetious and rapid movement; we forget that the clumsy valet makes remarks as witty as Sheridan himself,[3] and that the irascible gentleman speaks as well as the most elegant of writers.[4] The playwright is also a man of letters; if, through mere animal and social spirit, he wished to amuse others and to amuse himself, he does not forget the interests of his talent and the care for his reputation. He has tastes, he appreciates the refinement of style, the worth of a new image, of a striking contrast, of a witty and well-considered insinuation. He has, above all, wit, a wonderful conversational wit, the art of rousing and sustaining the attention, of being biting, varied, of taking his hearers unawares, of throwing in a repartee, of setting folly in relief, of accumulating one after another witticisms and happy phrases. He brought himself

[3] Acres: "Odds blades! David, no gentleman will ever risk the loss of his honour!"

David: "I say, then, it would be but civil in honour never to risk the loss of a gentleman.—Look ye, master, this honour seems to me to be a marvellous false friend; ay, truly, a very courtier-like servant."—The Dramatic Works of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, 1828: "The Rivals," iv. 1.

[4] Sir Anthony: "Nay, but Jack, such eyes! so innocently wild! so bashfully irresolute! Not a glance but speaks and kindles some thought of love! Then, Jack, her cheeks! so deeply blushing at the insinuations of her tell-tale eyes! Then, Jack, her lips! O Jack, lips, smiling at their own discretion! and if not smiling, more sweetly pouting, more lovely in sullenness!"—Ibid. iii. 1.

to perfection subsequently to his first play, having acquired theatrical experience, writing and erasing; trying various scenes, recasting, arranging them; his desire was that nothing should arrest the interest, no improbability shock the spectator; that his comedy might glide on with the precision, certainty, uniformity of a good machine. He invents jests, replaces them by better ones; he whets his jokes, binds them up like a sheaf of arrows, and writes at the bottom of the last page, "Finished, thank God.—Amen." He is right, for the work costs him some pains; he will not write a second. This kind of writing, artificial and condensed as the satires of La Bruyère, is like a cut phial, into which the author has distilled all his reflections, his reading, his wit, without keeping anything for himself.

What is there in this celebrated "School for Scandal"? And how is it that it has cast upon English comedy, which day by day was being more and more forgotten, the radiance of a last success? Sheridan took two characters from Fielding, Blifil, and Tom Jones; two plays of Molière, "Le Misanthrope" and "Tartuffe"; and from these puissant materials, condensed with admirable cleverness, he has constructed the most brilliant firework imaginable. Molière has only one female slanderer, Célimène; the other characters serve only to give her a cue; there is quite enough of such a jeering woman; she rails on within certain bounds, without hurry, like a true queen of the drawing-room, who has time to converse, who knows that she is listened to, who listens to herself: she is a woman of society, who preserves the tone of refined conversation; and in order to smooth down the harshness, her slanders are interrupted by the calm reason and sensible discourse of the amiable Éliante. Molière represents the malice of the world without exaggeration; but in Sheridan they are rather caricatured than depicted. "Ladies, your servant," says Sir Peter; "mercy upon me! the whole set—a character dead at every sentence." [5] In fact, they are ferocious: it is a regular quarry; they even befoul one another, to deepen the outrage. Mrs. Candour remarks: "Yesterday Miss Prim assured me, that Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon are now become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted, that a certain widow in the next street had got rid of her dropsy, and recovered her shape

[5] "The School for Scandal," ii. 2.

in a most surprising manner. . . . I was informed, too, that Lord Flimsy caught his wife at a house of no extraordinary fame; and that Tom Saunter and Sir Harry Idle were to measure swords on a similar occasion." [6] Their animosity is so bitter that they lower themselves to play the part of buffoons. The most elegant person in the room, Lady Teazle, shows her teeth to ape a ridiculous lady, draws her mouth on one side, and makes faces. There is no pause, no softening; sarcasms fly about like pistol shots. The author had laid in a stock, he had to use them up. He himself is speaking through the mouth of his characters; he gives them all the same wit, that is his own, his irony, his harshness, his picturesque vigor; whatever they are, clowns, fops, old maids, no matter, the author's main business is to break out into twenty explosions in a minute:

"*Mrs. Candour.* Well, I will never join in the ridicule of a friend; so I tell my cousin Ogle, and ye all know what pretensions she has to beauty.

Crab. She has the oddest countenance—a collection of features from all the corners of the globe.

Sir Benjamin. She has, indeed, an Irish front.

Crab. Caledonian locks.

Sir B. Dutch nose.

Crab. Austrian lips.

Sir B. The complexion of a Spaniard.

Crab. And teeth *à la Chinoise.*

Sir B. In short, her face resembles a *table d'hôte* at Spa, where no two guests are of a nation.

Crab. Or a congress at the close of a general war, where every member seems to have a different interest, and the nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue." [7]

Or again:

"*Crab.* Sad news upon his arrival, to hear how your brother has gone on!

Joseph Surface. I hope no busy people have already prejudiced his uncle against him—he may reform.

Sir Benjamin. True, he may; for my part, I never thought him so utterly void of principle as people say, and though he has lost all his friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of amongst the Jews.

Crab. Foregad, if the old Jewry was a ward, Charles would be an alderman, for he pays as many annuities as the Irish Tontine; and when he is sick, they have prayers for his recovery in all the Synagogues.

Sir B. Yet no man lives in greater splendor.—They tell me, when he

[6] "The School for Scandal," i. 1. [7] Ibid. ii. 2.

entertains his friends, he can sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities, have a score of tradesmen waiting in the ante-chamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair." [8]

And again:

"*Sir B.* Mr. Surface, I did not mean to hurt you, but depend on't, your brother is utterly undone.

Crab. Oh! undone as ever man was—can't raise a guinea.

Sir B. Everything is sold, I am told, that was moveable.

Crab. Not a moveable left, except some old bottles and some pictures, and they seem to be framed in the wainscot, egad.

Sir B. I am sorry to hear also some bad stories of him.

Crab. Oh! he has done many mean things, that's certain.

Sir B. But, however, he's your brother.

Crab. Ah! as he is your brother—we'll tell you more another opportunity." [9]

In this manner has he pointed, multiplied, driven into the quick the measured epigrams of Molière. And yet is it possible to grow weary of such a well-sustained discharge of malice and witticisms?

Observe also the change which the hypocrite undergoes under Sheridan's treatment. Doubtless all the grandeur disappears from the part. Joseph Surface does not uphold, like Tartuffe, the interest of the comedy; he does not possess, like his ancestor, the nature of a cad, the boldness of a man of action, the manners of a beadle, the neck and shoulders of a monk. He is merely selfish and cautious; if he is engaged in an intrigue, it is rather against his will; he is only half-hearted in the matter, like a correct young man, well dressed, with a fair income, timorous and fastidious by nature, discreet in manners, and without violent passions; all about him is soft and polished, he takes his tone from the times, he makes no display of religion, though he does of morality; he is a man of measured speech, of lofty sentiments, a disciple of Dr. Johnson or of Rousseau, a dealer in set phrases. There is nothing on which to construct a drama in this common-place person; and the fine situations which Sheridan takes from Molière lose half their force through depending on such pitiful support. But how this insufficiency is covered by the quickness, abundance, naturalness of the incidents! how skill makes up for everything! how it seems capable of supplying everything! even genius! how the spectator laughs to see

[8] "The School for Scandal," i. 1. [9] Ibid.

Joseph caught in his sanctuary like a fox in his hole; obliged to hide the wife, then to conceal the husband; forced to run from the one to the other; busy in hiding the one behind the screen, and the other in his closet; reduced, in casting himself into his own snares, in justifying those whom he wished to ruin, the husband in the eyes of the wife, the nephew in the eyes of the uncle, to ruin the only man whom he wished to justify; namely, the precious and immaculate Joseph Surface; to turn out in the end ridiculous, odious, baffled, confounded, in spite of his adroitness, even by reason of his adroitness, step by step, without quarter or remedy; to sneak off, poor fox, with his tail between his legs, his skin spoiled, amid hootings and laughter! And how, at the same time, side by side with this, the naggings of Sir Peter and his wife, the suppers, songs, the picture sale at the spendthrift's house, weave a comedy in a comedy, and renew the interest by renewing the attention! We cease to think of the meagreness of the characters, as we cease to think of the deviation from truth; we are willingly carried away by the vivacity of the action, dazzled by the brilliancy of the dialogue; we are charmed, applaud; admit that, after all, next to great inventive faculty, animation and wit are the most agreeable gifts in the world: we appreciate them in their season, and find that they also have their place in the literary banquet; and that if they are not worth as much as the substantial joints, the natural and generous wines of the first course, at least they furnish the dessert.

The dessert over, we must leave the table. After Sheridan, we leave it forthwith. Henceforth comedy languishes, fails; there is nothing left but farce, such as Townley's "High Life Below Stairs," the burlesques of George Colman, a tutor, an old maid, countrymen and their dialect; caricature succeeds painting; Punch raises a laugh when the days of Reynolds and Gainsborough are over. There is nowhere in Europe, at the present time, a more barren stage; the higher classes abandon it to the people. This is because the form of society and of intellect which had called it into being, has disappeared. Vivacity, and the abundance of original conceptions, had peopled the stage of the Renaissance in England—a surfeit which, unable to display itself in systematic argument, or to express itself in philosophical ideas, found its natural outlet only in mimic

action and talking characters. The wants of polished society had nourished the English comedy of the seventeenth century —a society which, accustomed to the representations of the court and the displays of the world, sought on the stage a copy of its conversation and its drawing-rooms. With the decline of the court and the check of mimic invention, the genuine drama and the genuine comedy disappeared; they passed from the stage into books. The reason of it is, that people no longer live in public, like the embroidered dukes of Louis XIV and Charles II, but in their families, or at the writing-table; the novel replaces the theatre at the same time that citizen life replaces the life of the court.

CHAPTER SECOND

DRYDEN

COMEDY has led us a long way; we must return on our steps and consider other kinds of writing. A higher spirit moves in the midst of the great current. In the history of this talent we shall find the history of the English classical spirit, its structure, its gaps, and its powers, its formation and its development.

Section I.—Dryden's Début

The subject of the following lines is a young man, Lord Hastings, who died of smallpox at the age of nineteen:

"His body was an orb, his sublime soul
Did move on virtue's and on learning's pole;
. . . Come, learned Ptolemy, and trial make
If thou this hero's altitude canst take.
. . . Blisters with pride swell'd, which through 's flesh did sprout
Like rose-buds, stuck i' the lily skin about.
Each little pimple had a tear in it,
To wail the fault its rising did commit. . . .
Or were these gems sent to adorn his skin,
The cabinet of a richer soul within?
No comet need foretell his change drew on
Whose corpse might seem a constellation." [1]

With such a pretty morsel, Dryden, the greatest poet of the classical age, makes his *début*.

Such enormities indicate the close of a literary age. Excess of folly in poetry, as excess of injustice in political matters, leads up to and foretell revolutions. The Renaissance, unchecked and original, abandoned the minds of men to the excitement and caprice of imagination, the eccentricities, curiosities, outbreaks of a fancy which only cares to content itself, breaks out

[1] Dryden's Works, ed. Sir Walter Scott, 2d ed. 18 vols. 1821, xi. 94.

into singularities, has need of novelties, and loves audacity and extravagance, as reason loves justice and truth. After the extinction of genius folly remained; after the removal of inspiration nothing was left but absurdity. Formerly disorder and internal enthusiasm produced and excused *concetti* and wild flights; thenceforth men threw them out in cold blood, by calculation and without excuse. Formerly they expressed the state of the mind, now they belie it. So are literary revolutions accomplished. The form, no longer original or spontaneous, but imitated and passed from hand to hand, outlives the old spirit which had created it, and is in opposition to the new spirit which destroys it. This preliminary strife and progressive transformation make up the life of Dryden, and account for his impotence and his failures, his talent and his success.

Section II.—Dryden's Family and Education

Dryden's beginnings are in striking contrast with those of the poets of the Renaissance, actors, vagabonds, soldiers, who were tossed about from the first in all the contrasts and miseries of active life. He was born in 1631 of a good family; his grandfather and uncle were baronets; Sir Gilbert Pickering, his first cousin, was created a baronet by Charles I, was a member of Parliament, chamberlain to the Protector, and one of his Peers. Dryden was brought up in an excellent school, under Dr. Busby, then in high repute; after which he passed four years at Cambridge. Having inherited by his father's death a small estate, he used his liberty and fortune only to remain in his studious life, and continued in seclusion at the University for three years more. These are the regular habits of an honorable and well-to-do family, the discipline of a connected and solid education, the taste for classical and complete studies. Such circumstances announce and prepare, not an artist, but a man of letters.

I find the same inclination and the same signs in the remainder of his life, private or public. He regularly spends his mornings in writing or reading, then dines with his family. His reading was that of a man of culture and a critical mind, who does not think of amusing or exciting himself, but who learns

and judges. Vergil, Ovid, Horace, Juvenal, and Persius were his favorite authors; he translated several; their names were always on his pen; he discusses their opinions and their merits, feeding himself on that reasoning which oratorical customs had imprinted on all the works of the Roman mind. He is familiar with the new French literature, the heir of the Latin, with Corneille and Racine, Boileau, Rapin, and Bossu;[1] he reasons with them, often in their spirit, writes thoughtfully, seldom fails to arrange some good theory to justify each of his new works. He knew very well the literature of his own country, though sometimes not very accurately, gave to authors their due rank, classified the different kinds of writing, went back as far as old Chaucer, whom he translated and put into a modern dress. His mind thus filled, he would go in the afternoon to Will's coffee-house, the great literary rendezvous: young poets, students fresh from the University, literary dilettante crowded round his chair, carefully placed in summer on the balcony, in winter by the fire, thinking themselves fortunate to listen to him, or to extract a pinch of snuff respectfully from his learned snuff-box. For indeed he was the monarch of taste and the umpire of letters; he criticised novelties—Racine's last tragedy, Blackmore's heavy epic, Swift's first poems; slightly vain, praising his own writings, to the extent of saying that "no one had ever composed or will ever compose a finer ode" than his own "Alexander's Feast"; but full of information, fond of that interchange of ideas which discussion never fails to produce, capable of enduring contradiction, and admitting his adversary to be in the right. These manners show that literature had become a matter of study rather than of inspiration, an employment for taste rather than for enthusiasm, a source of amusement rather than of emotion.

His audience, his friendships, his actions, his quarrels, had the same tendency. He lived amongst great men and courtiers, in a society of artificial manners and measured language. He had married the daughter of Thomas, Earl of Berkshire; he was historiographer-royal and poet-laureate. He often saw the king and the princes. He dedicated each of his works to some

[1] Rapin (1621-1687), a French Jesuit, a modern Latin poet and literary critic. Bossu, or properly Lebossu (1631-1680), wrote a "Traité du Poème épique," which had a great success in its day. Both critics are now completely forgotten.—Tr.

lord, in a laudatory, flunkeyish preface, bearing witness to his intimate acquaintance with the great. He received a purse of gold for each dedication, went to return thanks; introduces some of these lords under pseudonyms in his "Essay on the Dramatic Art"; wrote introductions for the works of others, called them Mæcenas, Tibullus, or Pollio; discussed with them literary works and opinions. The re-establishment of the court had brought back the art of conversation, vanity, the necessity for appearing to be a man of letters and of possessing good taste, all the company-manners which are the source of classical literature, and which teach men the art of speaking well.[2] On the other hand, literature, brought under the influence of society, entered into society's interests, and first of all in petty private quarrels. Whilst men of letters learned etiquette, courtiers learned how to write. They soon became jumbled together, and naturally fell to blows. The Duke of Buckingham wrote a parody on Dryden, "The Rehearsal," and took infinite pains to teach the chief actor Dryden's tone and gestures. Later, Rochester took up the cudgels against the poet, supported a cabal in favor of Settle against him, and hired a band of ruffians to cudgel him. Besides this, Dryden had quarrels with Shadwell and a crowd of others, and finally with Blackmore and Jeremy Collier. To crown all, he entered into the strife of political parties and religious sects, fought for the Tories and Anglicans, then for the Roman Catholics; wrote "The Medal," "Absalom and Achitophel" against the Whigs: "Religio Laici" against Dissenters and Papists; then "The Hind and Panther" for James II, with the logic of controversy and the bitterness of party. It is a long way from this combative and argumentative existence to the reveries and seclusion of the true poet. Such circumstances teach the art of writing clearly and soundly, methodical and connected discussion, strong and exact style, banter and refutation, eloquence and satire; these gifts are necessary to make a man of letters heard or believed, and the mind enters compulsorily upon a track when it is the only one that can conduct it to its goal. Dryden entered upon it spontaneously. In his second production,[3] the abundance of well-

[2] In his "Defence of the Epilogue of the Second Part of the Conquest of Granada," iv. 226, Dryden says: "Now, if they ask me, whence it is that our conversation is so much refined, I must freely, and without flattery, ascribe it to the court."

[3] "Heroic stanzas to the memory of Oliver Cromwell."

ordered ideas, the energy and oratorical harmony, the simplicity, the gravity, the heroic and Roman spirit, announce a classic genius, the relative not of Shakespeare, but of Corneille, capable not of dramas, but of discussions.

Section III.—Dramatic Theories of Dryden

And yet, at first, he devoted himself to the drama; he wrote twenty-seven pieces, and signed an agreement with the actors of the King's Theatre to supply them with three every year. The theatre, forbidden under the Commonwealth, had just reopened with extraordinary magnificence and success. The rich scenes made movable, the women's parts no longer played by boys, but by women, the novel and splendid wax-lights, the machinery, the recent popularity of actors who had become heroes of fashion, the scandalous importance of the actresses, who were mistresses of the aristocracy and of the king, the example of the court and the imitation of France, drew spectators in crowds. The thirst for pleasure, long repressed, knew no bounds. Men indemnified themselves for the long abstinence imposed by fanatical Puritans; eyes and ears, disgusted with gloomy faces, nasal pronunciation, official ejaculations on sin and damnation, satiated themselves with sweet singing, sparkling dress, the seduction of voluptuous dances. They wished to enjoy life, and that in a new fashion; for a new world, that of the courtiers and the idle, had been formed. The abolition of feudal tenures, the vast increase of commerce and wealth, the concourse of landed proprietors, who let their lands and came to London to enjoy the pleasures of the town and to court the favors of the king, had installed on the summit of society, in England as well as in France, rank, authority, the manners and tastes of the world of fashion, of the idle, the drawing-room frequenters, lovers of pleasure, conversation, wit, and polish, occupied with the piece in vogue, less to amuse themselves than to criticise it. Thus was Dryden's drama built up; the poet, greedy of glory and pressed for money, found here both money and glory, and was half an innovator, with a large reinforcement of theories and prefaces, diverging from the old English drama, approaching the new French tragedy, attempting a

compromise between classical eloquence and romantic truth, accommodating himself as well as he could to the new public, which paid and applauded him.

"The language, wit, and conversation of our age, are improved and refined above the last. . . . Let us consider in what the refinement of a language principally consists; that is, 'either in rejecting such old words, or phrases, which are ill-sounding or improper; or in admitting new, which are more proper, more sounding, and more significant.' . . . Let any man who understands English, read diligently the works of Shakspeare and Fletcher, and I dare undertake, that he will find in every page either some solecism of speech, or some notorious flaw in sense. . . . Many of (their plots) were made of some ridiculous, incoherent story, which in one play many times took up the business of an age. I suppose I need not name 'Pericles Prince of Tyre,' nor the historical plays of Shakspeare: besides many of the rest, as the 'Winter's Tale,' 'Love's Labour Lost,' 'Measure for Measure,' which were either grounded on impossibilities, or at least so meanly written, that the comedy neither caused your mirth, nor the serious part your concernment. . . . I could easily demonstrate, that our admired Fletcher neither understood correct plotting, nor that which they call the decorum of the stage. . . . The reader will see Philaster wounding his mistress, and afterwards his boy, to save himself. . . . And for his shepherd he falls twice into the former indecency of wounding women." [1]

Fletcher nowhere permits kings to retain a dignity suited to kings. Moreover, the action of these authors' plays is always barbarous. They introduce battles on the stage; they transport the scene in a moment to a distance of twenty years or five hundred leagues, and a score of times consecutively in one act; they jumble together three or four different actions, especially in the historical dramas. But they sin most in style. Dryden says of Shakespeare: "Many of his words, and more of his phrases, are scarce intelligible. And of those which we understand, some are ungrammatical, others coarse; and his whole style is so pestered with figurative expressions, that it is as affected as it is obscure." [2] Ben Jonson himself often has bad plots, redundancies, barbarisms: "Well-placing of words, for the sweetness of pronunciation, was not known till Mr. Waller introduced it." [3] All, in short, descend to quibbles, low and common expressions: "In the age wherein those poets lived, there was less of gallantry than in ours. . . . Besides the

[1] "Defence of the Epilogue of the Second Part of the Conquest of Granada," iv. 213.

[2] Preface to "Troilus and Cressida," vi. 239.

[3] "Defence of the Epilogue of the Conquest of Granada," iv. 219.

want of education and learning, they wanted the benefit of converse. . . . Gentlemen will now be entertained with the follies of each other; and, though they allow Cob and Tibb to speak properly, yet they are not much pleased with their tankard, or with their rags." [4] For these gentlemen we must now write, and especially for "reasonable men"; for it is not enough to have wit or to love tragedy, in order to be a good critic: we must possess sound knowledge and a lofty reason, know Aristotle, Horace, Longinus, and pronounce judgment according to their rules.[5] These rules, based upon observation and logic, prescribe unity of action; that this action should have a beginning, middle, and end; that its parts should proceed naturally one from the other; that it should excite terror and pity, so as to instruct and improve us; that the characters should be distinct, harmonious, conformable with tradition or the design of the poet. Such, says Dryden, will be the new tragedy, closely allied, it seems, to the French, especially as he quotes Bossu and Rapin, as if he took them for instructors.

Yet it differs from it, and Dryden enumerates all that an English pit can blame on the French stage. He says:

"The beauties of the French poesy are the beauties of a statue, but not of a man, because not animated with the soul of poesy, which is imitation of humour and passions. . . . He who will look upon their plays which have been written till these last ten years, or thereabouts, will find it an hard matter to pick out two or three passable humours amongst them. Corneille himself, their arch-poet, what has he produced except the 'Liar'? and you know how it was cried up in France; but when it came upon the English stage, though well translated, . . . the most favourable to it would not put it in competition with many of Fletcher's or Ben Jonson's. . . . Their verses are to me the coldest I have ever read, . . . their speeches being so many declamations. When the French stage came to be reformed by Cardinal Richelieu, those long harangues were introduced, to comply with the gravity of a churchman. Look upon the 'Cinna' and the 'Pompey'; they are not so properly to be called plays as long discourses of reasons of state; and 'Polieucte,' in matters of religion is as solemn as the long stops upon our organs. Since that time it is grown into a custom, and their actors speak by the hour-glass, like our parsons. . . . I deny not but this may suit well enough with the French; for as we who are a more sullen people, come to be diverted at our plays, so they, who are of an airy and gay temper, come thither to make themselves more serious." [6]

[4] "Defence of the Epilogue of the Conquest of Granada," iv. 225-228.
[5] Preface to "All for Love," v. 306.
[6] "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," xv. 337-341.

As for the tumults and combats which the French relegate behind the scenes, "nature has so formed our countrymen to fierceness, . . . they will scarcely suffer combats and other objects of horror to be taken from them."[7] Thus the French, by fettering themselves with these scruples,[8] and confining themselves in their unities and their rules, have removed action from their stage, and brought themselves down to unbearable monotony and dryness. They lack originality, naturalness, variety, fulness.

> ". . . Contented to be thinly regular: . . .
> Their tongue, enfeebled, is refined too much,
> And, like pure gold, it bends at every touch.
> Our sturdy Teuton yet will art obey,
> More fit for manly thought, and strengthened with allay."[9]

Let them laugh as much as they like at Fletcher and Shakespeare; there is in them "a more masculine fancy and greater spirit in the writing than there is in any of the French."

Though exaggerated, this criticism is good; and because it is good, I mistrust the works which the writer is to produce. It is dangerous for an artist to be excellent in theory; the creative spirit is hardly consonant with the criticising spirit: he who, quietly seated on the shore, discusses and compares, is hardly capable of plunging straight and boldly into the stormy sea of invention. Moreover, Dryden holds himself too evenly poised betwixt the moods; original artists love exclusively and unjustly a certain idea and a certain world: the rest disappears from their eyes; confined to one region of art, they deny or scorn the other; it is because they are limited that they are strong. We see beforehand that Dryden, pushed one way by his English mind,

[7] "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," xv. 343.

[8] In the preface of "All for Love," v. 308, Dryden says: "In this nicety of manners does the excellency of French poetry consist. Their heroes are the most civil people breathing, but their good breeding seldom extends to a word of sense; all their wit is in their ceremony; they want the genius which animates our stage. . . . Thus, their Hippolytus is so scrupulous in point of decency, that he will rather expose himself to death than accuse his stepmother to his father; and my critics, I am sure, will commend him for it: But we of grosser apprehensions are apt to think that this excess of generosity is not practicable but with fools and madmen. . . . But take Hippolytus out of his poetic fit, and I suppose he would think it a wiser part to set the saddle on the right horse, and chuse rather to live with the reputation of a plain-spoken honest man, than to die with the infamy of an incestuous villain. . . . (The poet) has chosen to give him the turn of gallantry, sent him to travel from Athens to Paris, taught him to make love, and transformed the Hippolytus of Euripides into Monsieur Hippolite." This criticism shows in a small compass all the common sense and freedom of thought of Dryden; but, at the same time, all the coarseness of his education and of his age.

[9] Epistle xiv. to Mr. Motteux, xi. 70.

will be drawn another way by his French rules; that he will alternately venture and partly restrain himself; that he will attain mediocrity; that is, platitude; that his faults will be incongruities; that is, absurdities. All original art is self-regulated, and no original art can be regulated from without: it carries its own counterpoise, and does not receive it from elsewhere; it constitutes an inviolable whole; it is an animated existence, which lives on its own blood, and which languishes or dies if deprived of some of its blood and supplied from the veins of another. Shakespeare's imagination cannot be guided by Racine's reason, nor Racine's reason be exalted by Shakespeare's imagination; each is good in itself, and excludes its rival; to unite them would be to produce a bastard, a weakling, and a monster. Disorder, violent and sudden action, harsh words, horror, depth, truth, exact imitation of reality, and the lawless outbursts of mad passions—these features of Shakespeare become each other. Order, measure, eloquence, aristocratic refinement, worldly urbanity, exquisite painting of delicacy and virtue, all Racine's features suit each other. It would destroy the one to attenuate, the other to inflame him. Their whole being and beauty consist in the agreement of their parts: to mar this agreement would be to abolish their being and their beauty. In order to produce, we must invent a personal and harmonious conception: we must not mingle two strange and opposite ones. Dryden has left undone what he should have done, and has done what he should not have done.

He had, moreover, the worst of audiences, debauched and frivolous, void of individual taste, floundering amid confused recollections of the national literature and deformed imitations of foreign literature, expecting nothing from the stage but the pleasure of the senses or the gratification of curiosity. In reality, the drama, like every work of art, only gives life and truth to a profound ideal of man and of existence; there is a hidden philosophy under its circumvolutions and violences, and the public ought to be capable of comprehending it, as the poet is of conceiving it. The audience must have reflected or felt with energy or refinement, in order to take in energetic or refined thoughts; Hamlet and Iphigénie will never move a vulgar roisterer or a lover of money. The character who weeps on the stage only rehearses our own tears; our interest is but sympa-

thy; and the drama is like an external conscience, which shows us what we are, what we love, what we have felt. What could the drama teach to gamesters like St. Albans, drunkards like Rochester, prostitutes like Castlemaine, old boys like Charles II? What spectators were those coarse epicureans, incapable even of an assumed decency, lovers of brutal pleasures, barbarians in their sports, obscene in words, void of honor, humanity, politeness, who made the court a house of ill-fame! The splendid decorations, change of scenes, the patter of long verse and forced sentiments, the observance of a few rules imported from Paris—such was the natural food of their vanity and folly, and such the theatre of the English Restoration.

I take one of Dryden's tragedies, very celebrated in time past, "Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr";—a fine title, and fit to make a stir. The royal martyr is St. Catharine, a princess of royal blood as it appears, who is brought before the tyrant Maximin. She confesses her faith, and a pagan philosopher, Apollonius, is set loose against her, to refute her. Maximin says:

> "War is my province!—Priest, why stand you mute?
> You gain by heaven, and, therefore, should dispute."

Thus encouraged, the priest argues; but St. Catharine replies in the following words:

> ". . . Reason with your fond religion fights,
> For many gods are many infinites;
> This to the first philosophers was known,
> Who, under various names, ador'd but one." [10]

Apollonius scratches his ear a little, and then answers that there are great truths and good moral rules in paganism. The pious logician immediately replies:

> "Then let the whole dispute concluded be
> Betwixt these rules, and Christianity." [11]

Being nonplussed, Apollonius is converted on the spot, insults the prince, who, finding St. Catharine very beautiful, becomes suddenly enamored, and makes jokes:

> "Absent, I may her martyrdom decree,
> But one look more will make that martyr me." [12]

[10] "Tyrannic Love," iii. 2, 1. [11] Ibid. [12] Ibid.

In this dilemma he sends Placidius, "a great officer," to St. Catharine; the great officer quotes and praises the gods of Epicurus; forthwith the lady propounds the doctrine of final causes, which upsets that of atoms. Maximin comes himself, and says:

> "Since you neglect to answer my desires,
> Know, princess, you shall burn in other fires." [13]

Thereupon she beards and defies him, calls him a slave, and walks off. Touched by these delicate manners, he wishes to marry her lawfully, and to repudiate his wife. Still, to omit no expedient, he employs a magician, who utters invocations (on the stage), summons the infernal spirits, and brings up a troop of spirits; these dance and sing voluptuous songs about the bed of St. Catharine. Her guardian-angel comes and drives them away. As a last resource, Maximin has a wheel brought on the stage, on which to expose St. Catharine and her mother. Whilst the executioners are going to strip the saint, a modest angel descends in the nick of time, and breaks the wheel; after which the ladies are carried off, and their throats are cut behind the wings. Add to these pretty inventions a twofold intrigue, the love of Maximin's daughter, Valeria, for Porphyrius, captain of the Prætorian bands, and that of Porphyrius for Berenice, Maximin's wife; then a sudden catastrophe, three deaths, and the triumph of the good people, who get married and interchange polite phrases. Such is this tragedy, which is called French-like; and most of the others are like it. In "Secret Love," in "Marriage à la Mode," in "Aureng-Zebe," in the "Indian Emperor," and especially in the "Conquest of Granada," everything is extravagant. People cut one another to pieces, take towns, stab each other, shout lustily. These dramas have just the truth and naturalness of the libretto of an opera. Incantations abound; a spirit appears in the "Indian Emperor," and declares that the Indian gods "are driven to exile from their native lands." Ballets are also there; Vasquez and Pizarro, seated in "a pleasant grotto," watch like conquerors the dances of the Indian girls, who gambol voluptu-

[13] "Tyrannic Love," iii. 3, 1. This Maximin has a turn for jokes. Porphyrius, to whom he offers his daughter in marriage, says that "the distance was so vast"; whereupon Maximin replies: "Yet heaven and earth, which so remote appear, are by the air, which flows betwixt them, near" (2, 1).

ously about them. Scenes worthy of Lulli [14] are not wanting; Almeria, like Armide, comes to slay Cortez in his sleep, and suddenly falls in love with him. Yet the libretti of the opera have no incongruities; they avoid all which might shock the imagination or the eyes; they are written for men of taste, who shun ugliness and heaviness of any sort. Would you believe it? In the "Indian Emperor," Montezuma is tortured on the stage, and to cap all, a priest tries to convert him in the mean while.[15] I recognize in this frightful pedantry the handsome cavaliers of the time, logicians and hangmen, who fed on controversy, and for the sake of amusement went to look at the tortures of the Puritans. I recognize behind these heaps of improbabilities and adventures the puerile and worn-out courtiers, who, sodden with wine, were past seeing incongruities, and whose nerves were only stirred by startling surprises and barbarous events.

Let us go still further. Dryden would set up on his stage the beauties of French tragedy, and in the first place its nobility of sentiment. Is it enough to copy, as he does, phrases of chivalry? He would need a whole world, for a whole world is necessary to form noble souls. Virtue, in the French tragic poets, is based on reason, religion, education, philosophy. Their characters have that uprightness of mind, that clearness of logic, that lofty judgment, which plant in a man settled maxims and self-government. We perceive in their company the doctrines of Bossuet and Descartes; with them, reflection aids conscience; the habits of society add tact and *finesse*. The avoidance of violent actions and physical horrors, the proportion and order of the fable, the art of disguising or shunning coarse or low persons, the continuous perfection of the most measured and noble style, everything contributes to raise the stage to a sublime region, and we believe in higher souls by seeing them

[14] Lulli (1633-1687), a renowned Italian composer. "Armide" is one of his chief works.—Tr.

[15] Christian Priest: "But we by martyrdom our faith avow."
Montezuma: "You do no more than I for ours do now.
To prove religion true,
If either wit or sufferings would suffice,
All faiths afford the constant and the wise,
And yet even they, by education sway'd,
In age defend what infancy obeyed."
Christian Priest: "Since age by erring childhood is misled,
Refer yourself to our unerring head."
Montezuma: "Man, and not err! what reason can you give?"
Christian Priest: "Renounce that carnal reason, and believe. . . ."
Pizarro: "Increase their pains, the cords are yet too slack."
—"The Indian Emperor," v. 2.

in a purer air. Can we believe in them in Dryden? Frightful or infamous characters every instant drag us down by their coarse expressions in their own mire. Maximin, having stabbed Placidius, sits on his body, stabs him twice more, and says to the guards:

> "Bring me Porphyrius and my empress dead:—
> I would brave heaven, in my each hand a head." [16]

Nourmahal, repulsed by her husband's son, insists four times, using such indecent and pedantic words as the following:

> "And why this niceness to that pleasure shown,
> Where nature sums up all her joys in one. . . .
> Promiscuous love is nature's general law;
> For whosoever the first lovers were,
> Brother and sister made the second pair,
> And doubled by their love their piety. . . .
> You must be mine, that you may learn to live." [17]

Illusion vanishes at once; instead of being in a room with noble characters, we meet with a mad prostitute and a drunken savage. When we lift the masks the others are little better. Almeria, to whom a crown is offered, says insolently:

> "I take this garland, not as given by you,
> But as my merit, and my beauty's due." [18]

Indamora, to whom an old courtier makes love, settles him with the boastfulness of an upstart and the coarseness of a kitchen-maid:

> "Were I no queen, did you my beauty weigh,
> My youth in bloom, your age in its decay." [19]

[16] "Tyrannic Love," iii. 5, 1. When dying Maximin says: "And shoving back this earth on which I sit, I'll mount, and scatter all the Gods I hit."

[17] "Aureng-Zebe," v. 4, 1. Dryden thought he was imitating Racine, when six lines further on he makes Nourmahal say:

> "I am not changed, I love my husband still;
> But love him as he was, when youthful grace
> And the first down began to shade his face:
> That image does my virgin-flames renew,
> And all your father shines more bright in you."

Racine's Phèdre (2, 5) thinks her husband Thesus dead, and says to her stepson Hippolytus:

> "Oui, prince, je languis, je brûle pour Thésée:
> Je l'aime . . .
> Mais fidèle, mais fier, et même un peu farouche,
> Charmant, jeune, traînant tous les cœurs après soi,
> Tel qu'on dépeint nos dieux, ou tel que je vous voi.
> Il avait votre port, vos yeux, votre langage;
> Cette noble pudeur colorait son visage."

According to a note in Sir Walter Scott's edition of Dryden's works, Langbaine traces this speech also to Seneca's Hippolytus.—Tr.

[18] "The Indian Emperor," i. 2.

[19] "Aureng-Zebe," v. 2, 1.

None of these heroines know how to conduct themselves; they look on impertinence as dignity, sensuality as tenderness; they have the recklessness of the courtesan, the jealousies of the grisette, the pettiness of a chapman's wife, the billingsgate of a fish-woman. The heroes are the most unpleasant of swash-bucklers. Leonidas, first recognized as hereditary prince, then suddenly forsaken, consoles himself with this modest reflection:

> "'Tis true I am alone.
> So was the godhead, ere he made the world,
> And better served himself than served by nature.
> . . . I have scene enough within
> To exercise my virtue." [20]

Shall I speak of that great trumpet-blower Almanzor, painted, as Dryden confesses, after Artaban,[21] a redresser of wrongs, a battalion-smiter, a destroyer of kingdoms? [22] We find nothing but overcharged sentiments, sudden devotedness, exaggerated generosities, high-sounding bathos of a clumsy chivalry; at bottom the characters are clods and barbarians, who have tried to deck themselves in French honor and fashionable politeness. And such, in fact, was the English court: it imitated that of Louis XIV as a sign-painter imitates an artist. It had neither taste nor refinement, and wished to appear as if it possessed them. Panders and licentious women, ruffianly or butchering courtiers, who went to see Harrison drawn, or to mutilate Coventry, maids of honor who have awkward accidents at a ball, or sell to the planters the convicts presented to them, a palace full of baying dogs and bawling gamesters, a king who would bandy obscenities in public with his half-naked mistresses [24]—such was the illustrious society; from French modes they took but dress, from French noble sentiments but high-sounding words.

[20] "Marriage à la Mode," iv. 3, 1.

[21] "The first image I had of him was from the Achilles of Homer, the next from Tasso's Rinaldo, and the third from the Artaban of Monsieur Calprenède."—Preface to "Almanzor."

[22] "The Moors have heaven, and me, to assist their cause"
"I'll whistle thy tame fortune after me" (3, 1).
He falls in love, and speaks thus:
"'Tis he; I feel him now in every part;
Like a new lord he vaunts about my heart,
Surveys in state each corner of my breast,
While poor fierce I, that was, am dispossess'd" (3, 1).

[23] Compare the song of the Zambra dance in the first part of "Almanzor and Almahide."

Section IV.—The Style of Dryden's Plays

The second point worthy of imitation in classical tragedy is the style. Dryden, in fact, purifies his own, and renders it more clear, by introducing close reasoning and precise words. He has oratorical discussions like Corneille, well-delivered retorts, symmetrical, like carefully parried arguments. He has maxims vigorously enclosed in the compass of a single line, distinctions, developments, and the whole art of special pleading. He has happy antitheses, ornamental epithets, finely wrought comparisons, and all the artifices of the literary mind. What is most striking is, that he abandons that kind of verse specially appropriated to the English drama which is without rhyme, and the mixture of prose and verse common to the old authors, for a rhymed tragedy like the French, fancying that he is thus inventing a new species, which he calls heroic play. But in this transformation the good perished, the bad remains. For rhyme differs in different races. To an Englishman it resembles a song, and transports him at once to an ideal and fairy world. To a Frenchman it is only a conventionalism or an expediency, and transports him at once to an antechamber or a drawing-room; to him it is an ornamental dress and nothing more; if it mars prose, it ennobles it; it imposes respect, not enthusiasm, and changes a vulgar into a high-bred style. Moreover, in French aristocratic verse everything is connected; pedantry, logical machinery of every kind, is excluded from it; there is nothing more disagreeable to well-bred and refined persons than the scholastic rust. Images are rare, but always well kept up; bold poesy, real fantasy, have no place in it; their brilliancy and divergencies would derange the politeness and regular flow of the social world. The right word, the prominence of free expressions, are not to be met with in it; general terms, always rather threadbare, suit best the caution and niceties of select society. Dryden sins heavily against all these rules. His rhymes, to an Englishman's ear, scatter at once the whole illusion of the stage; they see that the characters who speak thus are but speaking puppets; he himself admits that his heroic tragedy is only fit to represent on the stage chivalric poems like those of Ariosto and Spenser.

Poetic dash gives the finishing stroke to all likelihood. Would we recognize the dramatic accent in this epic comparison?

> "As some fair tulip, by a storm oppress'd
> Shrinks up, and folds its silken arms to rest;
> And, bending to the blast, all pale and dead,
> Hears, from within, the wind sing round its head—
> So, shrouded up, your beauty disappears:
> Unveil, my love, and lay aside your fears,
> The storm, that caused your fright, is pass'd and done." [1]

What a singular triumphal song are these *concetti* of Cortez as he lands:

> "On what new happy climate are we thrown,
> So long kept secret, and so lately known?
> As if our old world modestly withdrew,
> And here in private had brought forth a new." [2]

Think how these patches of color would contrast with the sober design of French dissertation. Here lovers vie with each other in metaphors; there a wooer, in order to magnify the beauties of his mistress, says that "bloody hearts lie panting in her hand." In every page harsh or vulgar words spoil the regularity of a noble style. Ponderous logic is broadly displayed in the speeches of princesses. "Two ifs," says Lyndaraxa, "scarce make one possibility." [3] Dryden sets his college cap on the heads of these poor women. Neither he nor his characters are well brought up; they have taken from the French but the outer garb of the bar and the schools; they have left behind symmetrical eloquence, measured diction, elegance and delicacy. Awhile before, the licentious coarseness of the Restoration pierced the mask of the fine sentiments with which it was covered; now the rude English imagination breaks the oratorical mould in which it tried to enclose itself.

Let us look at the other side of the picture. Dryden would keep the foundation of the old English drama, and retains the abundance of events, the variety of plot, the unforeseen accidents, and the physical representation of bloody or violent ac-

[1] The first part of "Almanzor and Almahide," iv. 5, 2.
[2] "The Indian Emperor," ii. 1, 1.
[3] The first part of "Almanzor and Almahide," iv. 2, 1. This same Lyndaraxa says also to Abdalla (4, 2), "Poor women's thoughts are all extempore." These logical ladies can be very coarse; for example, this same damsel says in Act 2, 1, to the same lover, who entreats her to make him "happy," "If I make you so, you shall pay my price."

tion. He kills as many people as Shakespeare. Unfortunately, all poets are not justified in killing. When they take their spectators among murders and sudden accidents, they ought to have a hundred hidden preparations. Fancy a sort of rapture and romantic folly, a most daring style, eccentric and poetical, songs, pictures, reveries spoken aloud, frank scorn of all verisimilitude, a mixture of tenderness, philosophy, and mockery, all the retiring charms of varied feelings, all the whims of nimble fancy: the truth of events matters little. No one who ever saw "Cymbeline" or "As you Like it" looked at these plays with the eyes of a politician or a historian; no one took these military processions, these accessions of princes, seriously; the spectators were present at dissolving views. They did not demand that things should proceed after the laws of nature; on the contrary, they willingly did require that they should proceed against the laws of nature. The irrationality is the charm. That new world must be all imagination; if it was only so by halves, no one would care to rise to it. This is why we do not rise to Dryden's. A queen dethroned, then suddenly set up again; a tyrant who finds his lost son, is deceived, adopts a girl in his place; a young prince led to punishment, who snatches the sword of a guard, and recovers his crown; such are the romances which constitute the "Maiden Queen" and the "Marriage à la Mode." We can imagine what a display classical dissertations make in this medley; solid reason beats down imagination, stroke after stroke, to the ground. We cannot tell if the matter be a true portrait or a fancy painting; we remain suspended between truth and fancy; we should like either to get up to heaven or down to earth, and we jump down as quick as possible from the clumsy scaffolding where the poet would perch us.

On the other hand, when Shakespeare wishes to impress a doctrine, not raise a dream, he attunes us to it beforehand, but after another fashion. We naturally remain in doubt before a cruel action: we divine that the red irons which are about to put out the eyes of little Arthur are painted sticks, and that the six rascals that besiege Rome, are supernumeraries hired at a shilling a night. To conquer this mistrust we must employ the most natural style, circumstantial and rude imitation of the manners of the guardroom and of the alehouse; I can only believe in

Jack Cade's sedition on hearing the dirty words of bestial lewdness and mobbish stupidity. You must let me have the jests, the coarse laughter, drunkenness, the manners of butchers and tanners, to make me imagine a mob or an election. So in murders, let me feel the fire of bubbling passion, the accumulation of despair or hate which have unchained the will and nerved the hand. When the unchecked words, the fits of rage, the convulsive ejaculations of exasperated desire, have brought me in contact with all the links of the inward necessity which has moulded the man and guided the crime, I no longer think whether the knife is bloody, because I feel with inner trembling the passion which has handled it. Have I to see if Shakespeare's Cleopatra be really dead? The strange laugh that bursts from her when the basket of asps is brought, the sudden tension of nerves, the flow of feverish words, the fitful gayety, the coarse language, the torrent of ideas with which she overflows, have already made me sound all the depths of suicide,[4] and I have foreseen it as soon as she came on the stage. This madness of the imagination, incited by climate and despotic power; these woman's, queen's, prostitute's nerves; this marvellous self-abandonment to all the fire of invention and desire —these cries, tears, foam on the lips, tempest of insults, actions, emotions; this promptitude to murder, announce the rage with which she would rush against the least obstacle and be dashed to pieces. What does Dryden effect in this matter with his written phrases? What of the maid speaking, in the author's words, who bids her half-mad mistress "call reason to assist

[4] "He words me, girls; he words me, that I should not
Be noble to myself; but hark thee, Charmian. . . .
Now, Iras, what think'st thou?
Thou, an Egyptian puppet shalt be shown
In Rome, as well as I: mechanic slaves,
With greasy aprons, rules and hammers, shall
Uplift us to the view. . . .
Saucy lictors
Will catch at us, like strumpets; and scald rhymers
Ballad us out o' tune; the quick comedians
Extemporally will stage us, and present
Our Alexandrian revels; Antony
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
I' the posture of a whore. . . .
Husband, I come:
Now to that name my courage prove my title!
I am fire and air; my other elements
I give to baser life. So; have you done?
Come, then, and take the last warmth of my lips.
Farewell, kind Charmian; Iras, long farewell. . . .
Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep?"
—Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra," 5, 2.
These two last lines, referring to the asp, are sublime, as the bitter joke of a courtesan and an artist.

you?" [5] What if such a Cleopatra as his, designed after Lady Castlemaine,[6] skilled in artifices and whimpering, voluptuous and a coquette, with neither the nobleness of virtue, nor the greatness of crime:

> "Nature meant me
> A wife; a silly, harmless household dove,
> Fond without art, and kind without deceit." [7]

Nay, Nature meant nothing of the kind, or otherwise this turtle dove would not have tamed or kept an Antony; a woman without any prejudices alone could do it, by the superiority of boldness and the fire of genius. I can see already from the title of the piece why Dryden has softened Shakespeare: "All for Love; or, the World well Lost." What a wretchedness, to reduce such events to a pastoral, to excuse Antony, to praise Charles II indirectly, to bleat as in a sheepfold! And such was the taste of his contemporaries. When Dryden wrote the "Tempest" after Shakespeare, and the "State of Innocence" after Milton, he again spoiled the ideas of his masters; he turned Eve and Miranda into courtesans; [8] he extinguished everywhere, under conventionalism and indecencies, the frankness, severity, delicacy, and charm of the original invention. By his side, Settle, Shadwell, Sir Robert Howard did worse. "The Empress of Morocco," by Settle, was so admired, that the gentlemen and ladies of the court learned it by heart, to play at Whitehall before the king. And this was not a passing fancy; although modified, the taste was to endure. In vain poets rejected a part of the French alloy wherewith they had mixed their native metal; in vain they returned to the old un-

[5] Iras: "Call reason to assist you."
Cleopatra: "I have none,
And none would have: My love's a noble madness
Which shews the cause deserved it: Modest sorrow
Fits vulgar love, and for a vulgar man;
But I have loved with such transcendent passion,
I soared, at first, quite out of reason's view,
And now am lost above it."—"All for Love," v. 2, 1.

[6] Cleop.: "Come to me, come, my soldier, to my arms!
You've been too long away from my embraces;
But, when I have you fast, and all my own,
With broken murmurs, and with amorous sighs,
I'll say, you were unkind, and punish you,
And mark you red with many an eager kiss."—Ibid. v. 3, 1.

[7] Ibid. 4, 1.

[8] Dryden's Miranda says, in the "Tempest" (2, 2): "And if I can but escape with life, I had rather be in pain nine months, as my father threatened, than lose my longing." Miranda has a sister; they quarrel, are jealous of each other, and so on. See also in "The State of Innocence," 3, 1, the description which Eve gives of her happiness, and the ideas which her confidences suggest to Satan.

rhymed verses of Jonson and Shakespeare; in vain Dryden, in the parts of Antony, Ventidius, Octavia, Don Sebastian, and Dorax, recovered a portion of the old naturalness and energy; in vain Otway, who had real dramatic talent, Lee and Southern, attained a true or touching accent, so that once, in "Venice Preserved," it was thought that the drama would be regenerated. The drama was dead, and tragedy could not replace it; or rather each one died by the other; and their union, which robbed them of strength in Dryden's time, enervated them also in the time of his successors. Literary style blunted dramatic truth; dramatic truth marred literary style; the work was neither sufficiently vivid nor sufficiently well written; the author was too little of a poet or of an orator; he had neither Shakespeare's fire of imagination nor Racine's polish and art.[9] He strayed on the boundaries of two dramas, and suited neither the half-barbarous men of art nor the well-polished men of the court. Such indeed was the audience, hesitating between two forms of thought, fed by two opposite civilizations. They had no longer the freshness of feelings, the depth of impression, the bold originality and poetic folly of the cavaliers and adventurers of the Renaissance; nor will they ever acquire the aptness of speech, gentleness of manners, courtly habits, and cultivation of sentiment and thought which adorned the court of Louis XIV. They are quitting the age of solitary imagination and invention, which suits their race, for the age of reasoning and worldly conversation, which does not suit their race; they lose their own merits, and do not acquire the merits of others. They were meagre poets and ill-bred courtiers, having lost the art of imagination and having not yet acquired good manners, at times dull or brutal, at times emphatic or stiff. For the production of fine poetry, race and age must concur. This race, diverging from its own age, and fettered at the outset by foreign imitation, formed its classical literature but slowly; it will only attain it after transforming its religious and political condition: the age will be that of English reason. Dryden inaugurates it by his other works, and the writers who appear in the reign of Queen Anne will give it its completion, its authority, and its splendor.

[9] This impotence reminds one of Casimir Delavigne.

Section V.—His Merit as a Dramatist

But let us pause a moment longer to inquire whether, amid so many abortive and distorted branches, the old theatrical stock, abandoned by chance to itself, will not produce at some point a sound and living shoot. When a man like Dryden, so gifted, so well informed and experienced, works with a will, there is hope that he will some time succeed; and once, in part at least, Dryden did succeed. It would be treating him unjustly to be always comparing him with Shakespeare; but even on Shakespeare's ground, with the same materials, it is possible to create a fine work: only the reader must forget for a while the great inventor, the inexhaustible creator of vehement and original souls, and to consider the imitator on his own merits, without forcing an overwhelming comparison.

There is vigor and art in this tragedy of Dryden, "All for Love." "He has informed us, that this was the only play written to please himself."[1] And he had really composed it learnedly, according to history and logic. And what is better still, he wrote it in a manly style. In the preface he says: "The fabric of the play is regular enough, as to the inferior parts of it; and the unities of time, place, and action, more exactly observed, than perhaps the English theatre requires. Particularly, the action is so much one, that it is the only of the kind without episode, or underplot; every scene in the tragedy conducing to the main design, and every act concluding with a turn of it."[2] He did more; he abandoned the French ornaments, and returned to national tradition: "In my style I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespeare; which that I might perform more freely, I have disincumbered myself from rhyme. . . . Yet, I hope, I may affirm, and without vanity, that by imitating him, I have excelled myself throughout the play; and particularly, that I prefer the scene betwixt Antony and Ventidius in the first act, to anything which I have written in this kind."[3] Dryden was right; if Cleopatra is weak, if this feebleness of conception takes away the interest and mars the general effect, if the new rhetoric and the old emphasis at times suspend the emotion and destroy the likelihood, yet on the whole the drama stands erect, and

[1] See the introductory notice, by Sir Walter Scott, of "All for Love," v. 290.
[2] Ibid. v. 307.
[3] Ibid. v. 319.

what is more, moves on. The poet is skilful; he has planned, he knows how to construct a scene, to represent the internal struggle by which two passions contend for a human heart. We perceive the tragical vicissitude of the strife, the progress of a sentiment, the overthrow of obstacles, the slow growth of desire or wrath, to the very instant when the resolution, rising up of itself or seduced from without, rushes suddenly in one groove. There are natural words; the poet thinks and writes too genuinely not to discover them at need. There are manly characters: he himself is a man; and beneath his courtier's pliability, his affectations as a fashionable poet, he has retained his stern and energetic character. Except for one scene of recrimination, his Octavia is a Roman matron; and when, even in Alexandria, in Cleopatra's palace, she comes to look for Antony, she does it with a simplicity and nobility, not to be surpassed. "Cæsar's sister," cries out Antony, accosting her. Octavia answers:

> "That's unkind.
> Had I been nothing more than Cæsar's sister,
> Know, I had still remain'd in Cæsar's camp:
> But your Octavia, your much injured wife,
> Though banish'd from your bed, driven from your house,
> In spite of Cæsar's sister, still is yours.
> 'Tis true, I have a heart disdains your coldness,
> And prompts me not to seek what you should offer;
> But a wife's virtue still surmounts that pride.
> I come to claim you as my own; to show
> My duty first, to ask, nay beg, your kindness:
> Your hand, my lord; 'tis mine, and I will have it." [4]

Antony humiliated, refuses the pardon Octavia has brought him and tells her:

> "I fear, Octavia, you have begg'd my life, . . .
> Poorly and basely begg'd it of your brother.
> *Octavia.* Poorly and basely I could never beg,
> Nor could my brother grant. . . .
> My hard fortune
> Subjects me still to your unkind mistakes.
> But the conditions I have brought are such,
> You need not blush to take: I love your honour,
> Because 'tis mine; it never shall be said
> Octavia's husband was her brother's slave.
> Sir, you are free; free, even from her you loath;

[4] "All for Love," v. 3, 1.

For, though my brother bargains for your love,
Makes me the price and cement of your peace,
I have a soul like yours; I cannot take
Your love as alms, nor beg what I deserve.
I'll tell my brother we are reconciled;
He shall draw back his troops, and you shall march
To rule the East: I may be dropt at Athens;
No matter where. I never will complain,
But only keep the barren name of wife,
And rid you of the trouble." [5]

This is lofty; this woman has a proud heart, and also a wife's heart: she knows how to give and how to bear; and better, she knows how to sacrifice herself without self-assertion, and calmly; no vulgar mind conceived such a soul as this. And Ventidius, the old general, who with her and previous to her, comes to rescue Antony from his illusion and servitude, is worthy to speak in behalf of honor, as she had spoken for duty. Doubtless he was a plebeian, a rude and plain-speaking soldier, with the frankness and jests of his profession, sometimes clumsy, such as a clever eunuch can dupe, "a thick-skulled hero," who, out of simplicity of soul, from the coarseness of his training, unsuspectingly brings Antony back to the meshes, which he seemed to be breaking through. Falling into a trap, he tells Antony that he has seen Cleopatra unfaithful with Dolabella:

"*Antony.* My Cleopatra?
Ventidius. Your Cleopatra.
Dolabella's Cleopatra.
Every man's Cleopatra.
Antony. Thou liest.
Ventidius. I do not lie, my lord.
Is this so strange? Should mistresses be left,
And not provide against a time of change?
You know she's not much used to lonely nights." [6]

It was just the way to make Antony jealous and bring him back furious to Cleopatra. But what a noble heart has this Ventidius, and how we catch, when he is alone with Antony, the manly voice, the deep tones which had been heard on the battlefield! He loves his general like a good and honest dog, and asks no better than to die, so it be at his master's feet. He growls

[5] "All for Love," v. 3, 1. [6] Ibid. 4, 1.

stealthily on seeing him cast down, crouches round him, and suddenly weeps:

"*Ventidius.* Look, emperor, this is no common dew. [*Weeping.*]
I have not wept this forty years; but now
My mother comes afresh into my eyes,
I cannot help her softness.
Antony. By Heaven, he weeps! poor, good old man, he weeps!
The big round drops course one another down
The furrows of his cheeks.—Stop them, Ventidius,
Or I shall blush to death: they set my shame,
That caused them full before me.
Ventidius. I'll do my best.
Antony. Sure there's contagion in the tears of friends:
See, I have caught it too. Believe me, 'tis not
For my own grief, but thine. Nay, Father!" [7]

As we hear these terrible sobs, we think of Tacitus's veterans, who escaping from the marshes of Germany, with scarred breasts, white heads, limbs stiff with service, kissed the hands of Drusus, carried his fingers to their gums, that he might feel their worn and loosened teeth, incapable to bite the wretched bread which was given to them:

"No; 'tis you dream; you sleep away your hours
In desperate sloth, miscall'd philosophy.
Up, up, for honour's sake; twelve legions wait you,
And long to call you chief: By painful journies,
I led them, patient both of heat and hunger,
Down from the Parthian marshes to the Nile.
'Twill do you good to see their sun-burnt faces,
Their scarred cheeks, and chopt hands; there's virtue in them.
They'll sell those mangled limbs at dearer rates
Than yon trim bands can buy." [8]

And when all is lost, when the Egyptians have turned traitors and there is nothing left but to die well, Ventidius says:

"There yet remain
Three legions in the town. The last assault
Lopt off the rest: if death be your design—
As I must wish it now—these are sufficient
To make a heap about us of dead foes,
An honest pile for burial. . . . Chuse your death;
For, I have seen in him such various shapes,
I care not which I take: I'm only troubled.

[7] "All for Love," 1, 1. [8] Ibid.

The life I bear is worn to such a rag,
'Tis scarce worth giving. I could wish, indeed,
We threw it from us with a better grace;
That, like two lions taken in the toils,
We might at least thrust out our paws, and wound
The hunters that inclose us." [9] . . .

Antony begs him to go, but he refuses; and then he entreats Ventidius to kill him:

"*Antony.* Do not deny me twice.
Ventidius. By Heaven I will not.
Let it not be to outlive you.
Antony. Kill me first,
And then die thou; for 'tis but just thou serve
Thy friend, before thyself.
Ventidius. Give me your hand.
We soon shall meet again. Now, farewell, emperor!
[*Embraces.*]
. . . I will not make a business of a trifle:
And yet I cannot look on you, and kill you.
Pray, turn your face.
Antony. I do: strike home, be sure.
Ventidius. Home, as my sword will reach." [10]

And with one blow he kills himself. These are the tragic, stoical manners of a military monarchy, the great profusion of murders and sacrifices wherewith the men of this overturned and shattered society killed and died. This Antony, for whom so much has been done, is not undeserving of their love: he has been one of Cæsar's heroes, the first soldier of the van; kindness and generosity breathe from him to the last; if he is weak against a woman, he is strong against men; he has the muscles and heart, the wrath and passions of a soldier; it is this fever-heat of blood, this too quick sentiment of honor, which has caused him ruin; he cannot forgive his own crime; he possesses not that lofty genius which, dwelling in a region superior to ordinary rules, emancipates a man from hesitation, from discouragement and remorse; he is only a soldier, he cannot forget that he has not executed the orders given to him:

"*Ventidius.* Emperor!
Antony. Emperor? Why, that's the style of victory;
The conquering soldier, red with unfelt wounds,

[9] "All for Love," 5, 1. [10] Ibid.

Salutes his general so; but never more
Shall that sound reach my ears.
Ventidius. I warrant you.
Antony. Actium, Actium! Oh——
Ventidius. It sits too near you.
Antony. Here, here it lies; a lump of lead by day;
And in my short, distracted, nightly slumbers,
The hag that rides my dreams. . . .

Ventidius. That's my royal master;
And, shall we fight?
Antony. I warrant thee, old soldier.
Thou shalt behold me once again in iron;
And at the head of our old troops, that beat
The Parthians, cry aloud, 'Come, follow me.'" [11]

He fancies himself on the battlefield, and already his impetuosity carries him away. Such a man is not fit to govern men; we cannot master fortune until we have mastered ourselves; this man is only made to belie and destroy himself, and to be veered round alternately by every passion. As soon as he believes Cleopatra faithful, honor, reputation, empire, everything vanishes:

"*Ventidius.* And what's this toy,
In balance with your fortune, honour, fame?
Antony. What is't, Ventidius? it outweighs them all.
Why, we have more than conquer'd Cæsar now.
My queen's not only innocent, but loves me. . . .
Down on thy knees, blasphemer as thou art,
And ask forgiveness of wrong'd innocence!
Ventidius. I'll rather die than take it. Will you go?
Antony. Go! Whither? Go from all that's excellent!
. . . Give, you gods,
Give to your boy, your Cæsar,
This rattle of a globe to play withal,
This gewgaw world; and put him cheaply off:
I'll not be pleased with less than Cleopatra." [12]

Dejection follows excess; these souls are only tempered against fear; their courage is but that of the bull and the lion; to be fully themselves, they need bodily action, visible danger; their temperament sustains them; before great moral sufferings they give away. When Antony thinks himself deceived, he despairs, and has nothing left but to die:

[11] "All for Love," 1, 1. [12] Ibid. 2, 1, end.

"Let him (Cæsar) walk
Alone upon't. I'm weary of my part.
My torch is out; and the world stands before me,
Like a black desert at the approach of night;
I'll lay me down, and stray no farther on." [13]

Such verses remind us of Othello's gloomy dreams, of Macbeth's, of Hamlet's even; beyond the pile of swelling tirades and characters of painted cardboard, it is as though the poet had touched the ancient drama, and brought its emotion away with him.

By his side another also has felt it, a young man, a poor adventurer, by turns a student, actor, officer, always wild and always poor, who lived madly and sadly in excess and misery, like the old dramatists, with their inspiration, their fire, and who died at the age of thirty-four, according to some of a fever caused by fatigue, according to others of a prolonged fast, at the end of which he swallowed too quickly a morsel of bread bestowed on him in charity. Through the pompous cloak of the new rhetoric, Thomas Otway now and then reached the passions of the other age. It is plain that the times he lived in marred him, that he blunted himself the harshness and truth of the emotion he felt, that he no longer mastered the bold words he needed, that the oratorical style, the literary phrases, the classical declamation, the well-poised antitheses, buzzed about him, and drowned his note in their sustained and monotonous hum. Had he but been born a hundred years earlier! In his "Orphan" and "Venice Preserved" we encounter the sombre imaginations of Webster, Ford, and Shakespeare, their gloomy idea of life, their atrocities, murders, pictures of irresistible passions, which riot blindly like a herd of savage beasts, and make a chaos of the battlefield, with their yells and tumult, leaving behind them but devastation and heaps of dead. Like Shakespeare, he represents on the stage human transports and rages—a brother violating his brother's wife, a husband perjuring himself for his wife; Polydore, Chamont, Jaffier, weak and violent souls, the sport of chance, the prey of temptation, with whom transport or crime, like poison poured into the veins, gradually ascends, envenoms the whole man, is communicated to all whom he touches, and contorts and casts them down together in a con-

[13] "All for Love," 5, 1.

vulsive delirium. Like Shakespeare, he has found poignant and living words,[14] which lay bare the depths of humanity, the strange creaking of a machine which is getting out of order, the tension of the will stretched to breaking-point,[15] the simplicity of real sacrifice, the humility of exasperated and craving passion, which begs to the end, and against all hope, for its fuel and its gratification.[16] Like Shakespeare, he has conceived genuine women[17]—Monima, above all, Belvidera, who, like Imogen, has given herself wholly, and is lost as in an abyss of adoration for him whom she has chosen, who can but love, obey, weep, suffer, and who dies like a flower plucked from the stalk, when her arms are torn from the neck around which she has locked them. Like Shakespeare again, he has found, at least once, the grand bitter buffoonery, the harsh sentiment of human baseness; and he has introduced into his most painful tragedy, an impure caricature, an old senator, who unbends from his official gravity in order to play at his mistress's house the clown or the valet. How bitter! how true was his conception, in making the busy man eager to leave his robes and his ceremonies! how ready the man is to abase himself, when, escaped from his part, he comes to his real self! how the ape and the dog crop up in him! The senator Antonio comes to his Aquilina, who insults him; he is amused; hard words are a relief to compliments; he speaks in a shrill voice, runs into a falsetto like a zany at a country fair:

"*Antonio.* Nacky, Nacky, Nacky—how dost do, Nacky? Hurry, durry. I am come, little Nacky. Past eleven o'clock, a late hour; time in all conscience to go to bed, Nacky.—Nacky did I say? Ay, Nacky, Aquilina, lina, lina, quilina; Aquilina, Naquilina, Acky, Nacky, queen Nacky.—Come, let's to bed.—You fubbs, you pug you—You little puss. —Purree tuzzy—I am a senator.

Aquilina. You are a fool, I am sure.

Antonio. May be so too, sweet-heart. Never the worse senator for all that. Come, Nacky, Nacky; let's have a game at romp, Nacky! . . . You won't sit down? Then look you now; suppose me a bull,

[14] Monimia says, in the "Orphan" (5, end), when dying, "How my head swims! 'Tis very dark; good night."

[15] See the death of Pierre and Jaffier in "Venice Preserved" (5, last scene). Pierre, stabbed once, bursts into a laugh.

[16] Jaffier: "Oh, that my arms were rivetted
Thus round thee ever! But my friends, my oath!
This, and no more." [Kisses her.]
Belvidera: "Another, sure another
For that poor little one you've ta'en such care of;
I'll giv't him truly."
—"Venice Preserved," 5, 1.
There is jealousy in this last word.

[17] "Oh, thou art tender all,
Gentle and kind, as sympathizing nature,
Dove-like, soft and kind. . . .
I'll ever live your most obedient wife,
Nor ever any privilege pretend
Beyond your will."—"Orphan," 4, 1.

a Basan-bull, the bull of bulls, or any bull. Thus up I get, and with my brows thus bent—I broo; I say I broo, I broo, I broo. You won't sit down, will you—I broo. . . . Now, I'll be a senator again, and thy lover, little Nicky, Nacky. Ah, toad, toad, toad, toad, spit in my face a little, Nacky; spit in my face, pry'thee, spit in my face, never so little; spit but a little bit—spit, spit, spit, spit when you are bid, I say; do pry'thee, spit.—Now, now spit. What, you won't spit, will you? Then I'll be a dog.

Aquilina. A dog, my lord!

Antonio. Ay a dog, and I'll give thee this t'other purse to let me be a dog—and to use me like a dog a little. Hurry durry, I will—here 'tis. (*Gives the purse.*) . . . Now bough waugh waugh, bough, waugh.

Aquilina. Hold, hold, sir. If curs bite, they must be kicked, sir. Do you see, kicked thus?

Antonio. Ay, with all my heart. Do, kick, kick on, now I am under the table, kick again—kick harder—harder yet—bough, waugh, waugh, bough.—Odd, I'll have a snap at thy shins.—Bough, waugh, waugh, waugh, bough—odd, she kicks bravely." [18]

At last she takes a whip, thrashes him soundly, and turns him out of the house. He will return, we may be sure of that; he has spent a pleasant evening; he rubs his back, but he was amused. In short, he was but a clown who had missed his vocation, whom chance has given an embroidered silk gown, and who turns out at so much an hour political harlequinades. He feels more natural, more at his ease, playing Punch than aping a statesman.

These are but gleams: for the most part Otway is a poet of his time, dull and forced in color; buried, like the rest, in the heavy, gray, clouded atmosphere, half English and half French, in which the bright lights brought over from France, are snuffed out by the insular fogs. He is a man of his time; like the rest, he writes obscene comedies, "The Soldier's Fortune," "The Atheist," "Friendship in Fashion." He depicts coarse and vicious cavaliers, rogues on principle, as harsh and corrupt as those of Wycherley, Beaugard, who vaunts and practises the maxims of Hobbes; the father, an old, corrupt rascal, who brags of his morality, and whom his son coldly sends to the dogs with a bag of crowns: Sir Jolly Jumble, a kind of base Falstaff, a pander by profession, whom the courtesans call "papa, daddy," who, "if he sits but at the table with one, he'll be making nasty figures in the napkins:" [19] Sir Davy Dunce, a disgusting animal,

[18] "Venice Preserved," 3, 1. Antonio is meant as a copy of the "celebrated Earl of Shaftesbury, the lewdness of whose latter years," says Mr. Thornton in his edition of Otway's Works, 3 vols. 1815, "was a subject of general notoriety."—TR.

[19] "The Soldier's Fortune," 1, 1.

" who has such a breath, one kiss of him were enough to cure the fits of the mother; 'tis worse than assafœtida. Clean linen, he says, is unwholesome . . . ; he is continually eating of garlic, and chewing tobacco ";[20] Polydore, who, enamored of his father's ward, tries to force her in the first scene, envies the brutes, and makes up his mind to imitate them on the next occasion.[21] Otway defiles even his heroines.[22] Truly this society sickens us. They thought to cover all their filth with fine correct metaphors, neatly ended poetical periods, a garment of harmonious phrases and noble expressions. They thought to equal Racine by counterfeiting his style. They did not know that in this style the outward elegance conceals an admirable propriety of thought; that if it is a masterpiece of art, it is also a picture of manners; that the most refined and accomplished in society alone could speak and understand it; that it paints a civilization, as Shakespeare's does; that each of these lines, which appear so stiff, has its inflection and artifice; that all passions, and every shade of passions, are expressed in them—not, it is true, wild and entire, as in Shakespeare, but pared down and refined by courtly life; that this is a spectacle as unique as the other; that nature perfectly polished is as complex and as difficult to understand as nature perfectly intact; that as for the dramatists we speak of, they were as far below the one as below the other; and that, in short, their characters are as much like Racine's as the porter of M. de Beauvilliers or the cook of Mme. de Sévigné were like Mme. de Sévigné or M. de Beauvilliers.[23]

[20] " The Soldier's Fortune," I, 1.

[21] " Who'd be that sordid foolish thing called man,
To cringe thus, fawn, and flatter for a pleasure,
Which beasts enjoy so very much above him?
The lusty bull ranges thro' all the field,
And from the herd singling his female out,
Enjoys her, and abandons her at will.
It shall be so, I'll yet possess my love,
Wait on, and watch her loose unguarded hours:
Then, when her roving thoughts have been abroad,
And brought in wanton wishes to her heart;
I' th' very minute when her virtue nods,
I'll rush upon her in a storm of love,
Beat down her guard of honour all before me,
Surfeit on joys, till ev'n desire grew sick;
Then by long absence liberty regain,
And quite forget the pleasure and the pain."—" The Orphan," I, 1.
It is impossible to see together more moral roguery and literary correctness.

[22] Page (to Monimia): " In the morning when you call me to you,
And by your bed I stand and tell you stories,
I am ashamed to see your swelling breasts;
It makes me blush, they are so very white."
Monimia: " Oh men, for flatt'ry and deceit renown'd! "—Ibid.

[23] Burns said, after his arrival in Edinburgh, " Between the man of rustic life and the polite world, I observed little difference. . . . But a refined and accomplished woman was a being altogether new to me, and of which I had formed but a very inadequate idea."—(Burns's Works, ed. Cunningham, 1832, 8 vols. i. 207.)

Section VI.—His Prose Style

Let us then leave this drama in the obscurity which it deserves, and seek elsewhere, in studied writings, for a happier employment of a fuller talent.

Pamphlets and dissertations in verse, letters, satires, translations and imitations; here was the true domain of Dryden and of classical reason; this the field on which logical faculties and the art of writing find their best occupation.[1] Before descending into it, and observing their work, it will be as well to study more closely the man who so wielded them.

His was a singularly solid and judicious mind, an excellent reasoner, accustomed to mature his ideas, armed with good long-meditated proofs, strong in discussion, asserting principles, establishing his subdivisions, citing authorities, drawing inferences; so that, if we read his prefaces without reading his dramas, we might take him for one of the masters of the dramatic art. He naturally attains a prose style, definite and precise; his ideas are unfolded with breadth and clearness; his style is well moulded, exact and simple, free from the affectations and ornaments with which Pope's was burdened afterwards; his expression is, like that of Corneille, ample and full; the cause of it is simply to be found in the inner arguments which unfold and sustain it. We can see that he thinks, and that on his own behalf; that he combines and verifies his thoughts; that besides all this, he naturally has a just perception, and that with his method he has good sense. He has the tastes and the weaknesses which suit his cast of intellect. He holds in the highest estimation "the admirable Boileau, whose numbers are excellent, whose expressions are noble, whose thoughts are just, whose language is pure, whose satire is pointed, and whose sense is close. What he borrows from the ancients, he repays with usury of his own, in coin as good, and almost as universally valuable."[2] He has the stiffness of the logician poets, too strict and argumentative, blaming Ariosto "who neither designed justly, nor observed any unity of action, or compass of time, or moderation in the vastness of his draught; his style is luxurious, without majesty or decency, and

[1] Dryden says, in his "Essay on Satire," xiii. 30, "the stage to which my genius never much inclined me."

[2] "Essay on Satire," dedicated to the Earl of Dorset, xiii. 16.

his adventures without the compass of nature and possibility."[3] He understands delicacy no better than fancy. Speaking of Horace, he finds that "his wit is faint and his salt almost insipid. Juvenal is of a more vigorous and masculine wit; he gives me as much pleasure as I can bear."[4] For the same reason he depreciates the French style: "Their language is not strung with sinews, like our English; it has the nimbleness of a greyhound, but not the bulk and body of a mastiff. . . . They have set up purity for the standard of their language; and a masculine vigor is that of ours."[5] Two or three such words depict a man; Dryden has just shown, unwittingly, the measure and quality of his mind.

This mind, as we may imagine, is heavy, and especially so in flattery. Flattery is the chief art in a monarchical age. Dryden is hardly skilful in it, any more than his contemporaries. Across the Channel, at the same epoch, they praised just as much, but without cringing too low, because praise was decked out; now disguised or relieved by charm of style; now looking as if men took to it as to a fashion. Thus delicately tempered, people are able to digest it. But here, far from the fine aristocratic kitchen, it weighs like an undigested mass upon the stomach. I have related how Lord Clarendon, hearing that his daughter had just married the Duke of York in secret, begged the king to have her instantly beheaded;[6] how the Commons, composed for the most part of Presbyterians, declared themselves and the English people rebels, worthy of the punishment of death, and moreover cast themselves at the king's feet, with contrite air to beg him to pardon the House and the nation.[7] Dryden is no more delicate than statesmen and legislators. His dedications are as a rule nauseous. He says to the Duchess of Monmouth: "To receive the blessings and prayers of mankind, you need only be seen together. We are ready to conclude, that you are a pair of angels sent below to make virtue amiable in your persons, or to sit to poets when they would pleasantly instruct the age, by drawing goodness in the most perfect and alluring shape of nature. . . . No part of Europe can afford a parallel to your noble Lord in masculine beauty, and in goodliness of shape."[8] Elsewhere he says to the Duke of Monmouth:

[3] "Essay on Satire," xiii. 16.
[4] Ibid. 84.
[5] Dedication of the "Æneïs," xiv. 204.
[6] See Book III, chapter first, section
[7] Ibid.
[8] Dedication of "The Indian Emperor," ii. 261.

"You have all the advantages of mind and body, and an illustrious birth conspiring to render you an extraordinary person. The Achilles and the Rinaldo are present in you, even above their originals; you only want a Homer or a Tasso to make you equal to them. Youth, beauty, and courage (all which you possess in the height of their perfection) are the most desirable gifts of Heaven."[9] His Grace did not frown nor hold his nose, and his Grace was right.[10] Another author, Mrs. Aphra Behn, burned a still more ill-savored incense under the nose of Nell Gwynne: people's nerves were strong in those days, and they breathed freely where others would be suffocated. The Earl of Dorset having written some little songs and satires, Dryden swears that in his way he equalled Shakespeare, and surpassed all the ancients. And these bare-faced panegyrics go on imperturbably for a score of pages, the author alternately passing in review the various virtues of his great man, always finding that the last is the finest;[11] after which he receives by way of recompense a purse of gold. Dryden in taking the money, is not more a flunkey than others. The corporation of Hull, harangued one day by the Duke of Monmouth, made him a present of six broad pieces, which were presented to Monmouth by Marvell, the member for Hull.[12] Modern scruples were not yet born. I can believe that Dryden, with all his prostrations, lacked spirit more than honor.

A second talent, perhaps the first in carnival time, is the art of saying broad things, and the Restoration was a carnival, about as delicate as a bargee's ball. There are strange songs and rather shameless prologues in Dryden's plays. His "Marriage à la Mode" opens with these verses sung by a married woman:

> "Why should a foolish marriage vow,
> Which long ago was made,
> Oblige us to each other now,
> When passion is decay'd?
> We loved, and we loved as long as we could,
> 'Till our love was loved out in us both.

[9] Dedication of "Tyrannic Love," iii. 347.

[10] He also says in the same epistle dedicatory: "All men will join me in the adoration which I pay you." To the Earl of Rochester he writes in a letter (xviii. 90): "I find it is not for me to contend any way with your Lordship, who can write better on the meanest subject than I can on the best. . . . You are above any incense I can give you." In his dedication of the Fables (xi. 195) he compares the Duke of Ormond to Joseph, Ulysses, Lucullus, etc. In his fourth poetical epistle (xi. 20) he compares Lady Castlemaine to Cato.

[11] Dedication of the "Essay of Dramatic Poesy," xv. 286.

[12] See Andrew Marvell's Works, i. 210.

> But our marriage is dead when the pleasure is fled;
> 'Twas pleasure first made it an oath." [13]

The reader may read the rest for himself in Dryden's plays; it cannot be quoted. Besides, Dryden does not succeed well; his mind is on too solid a basis; his mood is too serious, even reserved, taciturn. As Sir Walter Scott justly said, "his indelicacy was like the forced impudence of a bashful man."[14] He wished to wear the fine exterior of a Sedley or a Rochester, made himself petulant of set purpose, and squatted clumsily in the filth in which others simply sported. Nothing is more sickening than studied lewdness, and Dryden studies everything, even pleasantry and politeness. He wrote to Dennis, who had praised him: "They (the commendations) are no more mine when I receive them than the light of the moon can be allowed to be her own, who shines but by the reflection of her brother."[15] He wrote to his cousin, in a diverting narration, these details of a fat woman, with whom he had travelled: "Her weight made the horses travel very heavily; but, to give them a breathing time, she would often stop us, . . . and tell us we were all flesh and no blood."[16] It seems that these were the sort of jokes which would then amuse a lady. His letters are made up of heavy official civilities, vigorously hewn compliments, mathematical salutes; his badinage is a dissertation, he props up his trifles with periods. I have found in his works some beautiful passages, but never agreeable ones; he cannot even argue with taste. The characters in his "Essay of Dramatic Poesy" think themselves still at college, learnedly quote Paterculus, and in Latin too, opposing the definition of the other side, and observing "that it was only *à genere et fine*, and so not altogether perfect."[17] In one of his prefaces he says in a professorial tone: "It is charged upon me that I make debauched persons my protagonists, or the chief persons of the drama; and that I make them happy in the conclusion of my play; against the law of comedy, which is to reward virtue, and punish vice."[18] Elsewhere he declares: "It is not that I would explode the use of metaphors from passion, for Longinus thinks them necessary to

[13] "Marriage à la Mode," iv. 245.
[14] Scott's "Life of Dryden," i. 447.
[15] Letter 2, "to Mr. John Dennis," xviii. 114.
[16] Letter 29, "to Mrs. Steward," xviii. 144.
[17] "Essay of Dramatic Poesy," xv. 302.
[18] Preface to "An Evening's Love," iii. 225.

raise it." His great "Essay on Satire" swarms with useless or long protracted passages, with the inquiries and comparisons of a commentator. He cannot get rid of the scholar, the logician, the rhetorician, and show the plain downright man.

But his true manliness was often apparent; in spite of several falls and many slips, he shows a mind constantly upright, bending rather from conventionality than from nature, possessing enthusiasm and afflatus, occupied with grave thoughts, and subjecting his conduct to his convictions. He was converted loyally and by conviction to the Roman Catholic creed, persevered in it after the fall of James II, lost his post of historiographer and poet-laureate, and though poor, burdened with a family, and infirm, refused to dedicate his "Vergil" to King William. He wrote to his sons: "Dissembling, though lawful in some cases, is not my talent: yet, for your sake, I will struggle with the plain openness of my nature. . . . In the mean time, I flatter not myself with any manner of hopes, but do my duty, and suffer for God's sake. . . . You know the profits (of 'Vergil') might have been more; but neither my conscience nor my honor would suffer me to take them; but I can never repent of my constancy, since I am thoroughly persuaded of the justice of the cause for which I suffer."[19] One of his sons having been expelled from school, he wrote to the master, Dr. Busby, his own former teacher, with extreme gravity and nobleness, asking without humiliation, disagreeing without giving offence, in a sustained and proud style, which is calculated to please, seeking again his favor, if not as a debt to the father, at least as a gift to the son, and concluding, "I have done something, so far to conquer my own spirit as to ask it." He was a good father to his children, as well as liberal, and sometimes even generous, to the tenant of his little estate.[20] He says: "More libels have been written against me than almost any man now living. . . . I have seldom answered any scurrilous lampoon, . . . and, being naturally vindictive, have suffered in silence, and possessed my soul in quiet."[21] Insulted by Collier as a corrupter of morals, he endured this coarse reproof, and nobly confessed the faults of his youth: "I shall say the less of Mr. Collier, because in many things he has taxed me justly; and

[19] Letter 23, "to his sons at Rome," xviii. 133.

[20] Scott's "Life of Dryden," i. 449.

[21] "Essay on Satire," xiii. 80.

I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expressions of mine which can be truly argued obscenity, profaneness, or immorality, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance."[22] There is some wit in what follows: "He (Collier) is too much given to horseplay in his raillery, and comes to battle like a dictator from the plough. I will not say 'the zeal of God's house has eaten him up,' but I am sure it has devoured some part of his good manners and civility."[23] Such a repentance raises a man; when he humbles himself thus, he must be a great man. He was so in mind and in heart, full of solid arguments and individual opinions, above the petty mannerism of rhetoric and affectations of style, a master of verse, a slave to his idea, with that abundance of thought which is the sign of true genius: "Thoughts such as they are, come crowding in so fast upon me, that my only difficulty is to chuse or to reject, to run them into verses, or to give them the other harmony of prose: I have so long studied and practised both, that they are grown into a habit, and become familiar to me."[24] With these powers he entered upon his second career; the English constitution and genius opened it to him.

Section VII.—How Literature in England is Occupied with Politics and Religion

"A man," says La Bruyère, "born a Frenchman and a Christian finds himself constrained in satire; great subjects are forbidden to him; he essays them sometimes, and then turns aside to small things, which he elevates by the beauty of his genius and his style." It was not so in England. Great subjects were given up to vehement discussion; politics and religion, like two arenas, invited every talent and every passion to boldness and to battle. The king, at first popular, had roused opposition by his vices and errors, and bent before public discontent as before the intrigue of parties. It was known that he had sold the interests of England to France; it was believed that he would deliver up the consciences of Protestants to the Papists. The lies of Oates, the murder of the magistrate Godfrey, his corpse solemnly paraded in the streets of London, had inflamed the imagination and

[22] Preface to the Fables, xi. 238. [23] Ibid. [24] Ibid. xi. 209.

prejudices of the people; the judges, blind or intimidated, sent innocent Roman Catholics to the scaffold, and the mob received with insults and curses their protestations of innocence. The king's brother had been dismissed from his offices, and it was proposed to exclude him from the throne. The pulpit, the theatre, the press, the hustings, resounded with discussions and recriminations. The names of Whigs and Tories arose, and the loftiest debates of political philosophy were carried on, enlivened by the feeling of present and practical interests, embittered by the rancor of old and wounded passions. Dryden plunged in; and his poem of "Absalom and Achitophel" was a political pamphlet. "They who can criticise so weakly," he says in the preface, "as to imagine that I have done my worst, may be convinced at their own cost that I can write severely with more ease than I can gently." A Biblical allegory, suited to the taste of the time, hardly concealed the names, and did not hide the men. He describes the tranquil old age and incontestable right of King David;[1] the charm, pliant humor, popularity of his natural son Absalom;[2] the genius and treachery of Achitophel,[3] who stirs up the son against the father, unites the clashing ambitions, and reanimates the conquered factions. There is hardly any wit here; there is no time to be witty in such contests; think of the roused people who listened, men in prison or exile who are waiting: fortune, liberty, life was at stake. The thing is to strike the nail on the head, hard, not gracefully. The public must recog-

[1] Charles II. [2] The Duke of Monmouth.
[3] The Earl of Shaftesbury:

"Of these the false Achitophel was first,
A name to all succeeding ages curst:
For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
Sagacious, bold and turbulent of wit—
Restless, unfixed in principles and place,
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;
A fiery soul, which working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.
A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high,
He sought the storm; but, for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near allied
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
Else, why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please,
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
And all to leave what with his toil he won,
To that unfeathered two-legged thing, a son,
Got, while his soul did huddled notions try,
And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy,
In friendship false, implacable in hate,
Resolved to ruin or to rule the state."

nize the characters, shout their names as they recognize the portraits, applaud the attacks which are made upon them, rail at them, hurl them from the high rank which they covet. Dryden passes them all in review:

"In the first rank of these did Zimri[4] stand,
A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was everything by starts and nothing long;
But in the course of one revolving moon
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman, who could every hour employ
With something new to wish or to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes;
And both, to show his judgment, in extremes:
So over-violent, or over-civil,
That every man with him was God or devil.
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art;
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
Beggared by fools whom still he found too late,
He had his jest, and they had his estate.
He laugh'd himself from Court; then sought relief
By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief:
For spite of him, the weight of business fell
On Absalom and wise Achitophel;
Thus wicked but in will, of means bereft,
He left not faction, but of that was left. . . .

"Shimei,[5] whose youth did early promise bring
Of zeal to God and hatred to his King;
Did wisely from expensive sins refrain
And never broke the Sabbath but for gain:
Nor ever was he known an oath to vent,
Or curse, unless against the government."

Against these attacks their chief, Shaftesbury, made a stand; when accused of high treason he was declared not guilty by the grand jury, in spite of all the efforts of the court, amidst the applause of a great crowd; and his partisans caused a medal to be struck, bearing his face, and boldly showing on the reverse London Bridge and the Tower, with the sun rising and shining

[4] The Duke of Buckingham. [5] Slingsby Bethel.

through a cloud. Dryden replied by his poem of the " Medal," and the violent diatribe overwhelmed the open provocation:

> " Oh, could the style that copied every grace
> And plow'd such furrows for an eunuch face,
> Could it have formed his ever-changing will,
> The various piece had tired the graver's skill!
> A martial hero first, with early care,
> Blown like a pigmy by the winds, to war;
> A beardless chief, a rebel ere a man,
> So young his hatred to his Prince began.
> Next this (how wildly will ambition steer!)
> A vermin wriggling in the usurper's ear;
> Bartering his venal wit for sums of gold,
> He cast himself into the saint-like mould,
> Groaned, sighed, and prayed, while godliness was gain,
> The loudest bag-pipe of the squeaking train."

The same bitterness envenomed religious controversy. Disputes on dogma, for a moment cast into the shade by debauched and sceptical manners, had broken out again, inflamed by the bigoted Roman Catholicism of the prince, and by the just fears of the nation. The poet who in " Religio Laici " was still an Anglican, though lukewarm and hesitating, drawn on gradually by his absolutist inclinations, had become a convert to Romanism, and in his poem of " The Hind and the Panther " fought for his new creed. " The nation," he says in the preface, " is in too high a ferment for me to expect either fair war or even so much as fair quarter from a reader of the opposite party." And then, making use of mediæval allegories, he represents all the heretical sects as beasts of prey, worrying a white hind of heavenly origin; he spares neither coarse comparisons, gross sarcasms, nor open objurgations. The argument is close and theological throughout. His hearers were not wits, who cared to see how a dry subject could be adorned; they were not theologians, only by accident and for a moment, animated by mistrustful and cautious feelings, like Boileau in his " Amour de Dieu." They were oppressed men, barely recovered from a secular persecution, attached to their faith by their sufferings, ill at ease under the visible menaces and ominous hatred of their restrained foes. Their poet must be a dialectician and a schoolman; he needs all the sternness of logic; he is immeshed in it, like a recent convert, saturated with the proofs which have separated him from the

national faith, and which support him against public reprobation, fertile in distinctions, pointing with his finger at the weaknesses of an argument, subdividing replies, bringing back his adversary to the question, thorny and unpleasing to a modern reader, but the more praised and loved in his own time. In all English minds there is a basis of gravity and vehemence; hate rises tragic, with a gloomy outbreak, like the breakers of the North Sea. In the midst of his public strife Dryden attacks a private enemy, Shadwell, and overwhelms him with immortal scorn.[6] A great epic style and solemn rhyme gave weight to his sarcasm, and the unlucky rhymester was drawn in a ridiculous triumph on the poetic car, whereon the muse sets the heroes and the gods. Dryden represented the Irishman Mac Flecknoe, an old king of folly, deliberating on the choice of a worthy successor, and choosing Shadwell as an heir to his gabble, a propagator of nonsense, a boastful conqueror of common sense. From all sides, through the streets littered with paper, the nations assembled to look upon the young hero, standing near the throne of his father, his brow surrounded with thick fogs, the vacant smile of satisfied imbecility floating over his countenance:

> "The hoary prince in majesty appear'd;
> High on a throne of his own labours rear'd.
> At his right hand our young Ascanius sate,
> Rome's other hope, and pillar of the state;
> His brows thick fogs instead of glories grace,
> And lambent dulness play'd around his face.
> As Hannibal did to the altars come,
> Sworn by his sire, a mortal foe to Rome;
> So Shadwell swore, nor should his vow be vain,
> That he, till death, true dulness would maintain;
> And, in his father's right and realm's defence,
> Ne'er to have peace with wit nor truce with sense.
> The king himself the sacred unction made,
> As king by office and as priest by trade.
> In his sinister hand, instead of ball,
> He placed a mighty mug of potent ale."

His father blesses him:

> "'Heavens bless my son! from Ireland let him reign
> To far Barbadoes on the western main;
> Of his dominion may no end be known,
> And greater than his father's be his throne;

[6] Mac Flecknoe.

Beyond Love's Kingdom let him stretch his pen!
He paused, and all the people cried Amen.
Then thus continued he: 'My son, advance
Still in new impudence, new ignorance.
Success let others teach, learn thou from me,
Pangs without birth and fruitless industry.
Let Virtuosos in five years be writ;
Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit. . . .
Let them be all by thy own model made
Of dulness and desire no foreign aid,
That they to future ages may be known,
Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own:
Nay, let thy men of wit too be the same,
All full of thee and differing but in name. . . .
Like mine thy gentle numbers feebly creep;
Thy tragic Muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep.
With whate'er gall thou setst thyself to write,
Thy inoffensive satires never bite;
In thy felonious heart though venom lies,
It does but touch thy Irish pen, and dies.
Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
In keen Iambics, but mild Anagram.
Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command
Some peaceful province in Acrostic land.
There thou may'st wings display, and altars raise,
And torture one poor word ten thousand ways;
Or, if thou wouldst thy different talents suit,
Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute.'
He said, but his last words were scarcely heard,
For Bruce and Longville had a trap prepared,
And down they set the yet declaiming bard.
Sinking he left his drugget robe behind,
Borne upwards by a subterranean wind.
The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
With double portion of his father's art." [7]

Thus the insulting masquerade goes on, not studied and polished like Boileau's "Lutrin," but rude and pompous, inspired by a coarse poetical afflatus, as you may see a great ship enter the muddy Thames, with spread canvas, cleaving the waters.

[7] Mac Flecknoe.

Section VIII.—Development of the Art of Writing

In these three poems, the art of writing, the mark and the source of classical literature, appeared for the first time. A new spirit was born and renewed this art, like everything else; thenceforth, and for a century to come, ideas sprang up and fell into their place after another law than that which had hitherto shaped them. Under Spenser and Shakespeare, living words, like cries or music, betrayed the internal imagination which gave them forth. A kind of vision possessed the artist; landscapes and events were unfolded in his mind as in nature; he concentrated in a glance all the details and all the forces which make up a being, and this image acted and was developed within him like the external object; he imitated his characters; he heard their words; he found it easier to represent them with every pulsation than to relate or explain their feelings; he did not judge, he saw; he was an involuntary actor and mimic; drama was his natural work, because in it the characters speak, and not the author. Then this complex and imitative conception changes color and is decomposed: man sees things no more at a glance, but in detail; he walks leisurely round them, turning his light upon all their parts in succession. The fire which revealed them by a single illumination is extinguished; he observes qualities, marks aspects, classifies groups of actions, judges and reasons. Words, before animated, and as it were swelling with sap, are withered and dried up; they become abstractions; they cease to produce in him figures and landscapes; they only set in motion the relics of enfeebled passion; they barely shed a few flickering beams on the uniform texture of his dulled conception; they become exact, almost scientific, like numbers, and like numbers they are arranged in a series, allied by their analogies—the first, more simple, leading up to the next, more composite—all in the same order, so that the mind which enters upon a track, finds it level, and is never obliged to quit it. Thenceforth a new career is opened; man has the whole world resubjected to his thought; the change in his thoughts has changed all aspects, and everything assumes a new form in his metamorphosed mind. His task is to explain and to prove; this, in short, is the classical style, and this is the style of Dryden.

He develops, defines, concludes; he declares his thought, then takes it up again, that his reader may receive it prepared, and having received, may retain it. He bounds it with exact terms justified by the dictionary, with simple constructions justified by grammar, that the reader may have at every step a method of verification and a source of clearness. He contrasts ideas with ideas, phrases with phrases, so that the reader, guided by the contrast, may not deviate from the route marked out for him. You may imagine the possible beauty of such a work. This poesy is but a stronger prose. Closer ideas, more marked contrasts, bolder images, only add weight to the argument. Metre and rhyme transform the judgments into sentences. The mind, held on the stretch by the rhythm, studies itself more, and by means of reflection arrives at a noble conclusion. The judgments are enshrined in abbreviative images, or symmetrical lines, which give them the solidity and popular form of a dogma. General truths acquire the definite form which transmits them to posterity, and propagates them in the human race. Such is the merit of these poems; they please by their good expressions.[1] In a full and solid web stand out cleverly connected or sparkling threads. Here Dryden has gathered in one line a long argument; there a happy metaphor has opened up a new perspective under the principal idea;[2] further on, two similar words, united together, have struck the mind with an unforeseen and cogent proof;[3] elsewhere a hidden comparison has thrown a tinge of glory or shame on the person who least expected it. These are all artifices or successes of a calculated style, which chains the attention, and leaves the mind persuaded or convinced.

[1] "Strong were our sires, and as they fought they writ,
Conquering with force of arms and dint of wit:
Theirs was the giant race before the flood,
And thus, when Charles return'd, our empire stood.
Like Janus, he the stubborn soil manured,
With rules of husbandry the rankness cured;
Tamed us to manners, when the stage was rude,
And boisterous English wit with art endured. . . .
But what we gain'd in skill we lost in strength,
Our builders were with want of genius curst;
The second temple was not like the first."
—"Epistle 12 to Congreve," xi. 59.

[2] "Held up the buckler of the people's cause
Against the crown, and skulk'd against the laws. . . .
Desire of power, on earth a vicious weed,
Yet, sprung from high, is of celestial seed!"
—"Absalom and Achitophel," Part i.

[3] "Why then should I, encouraging the bad,
Turn rebel, and run popularly mad?"
—Ibid.

Section IX.—Dryden's Translations and Adaptations.—His Occasional Soul-Stirring Verses

In truth, there is scarcely any other literary merit. If Dryden is a skilled politician, a trained controversialist, well armed with arguments, knowing all the ins and outs of discussion, versed in the history of men and parties, this pamphleteering aptitude, practical and English, confines him to the low region of every-day and personal controversies, far from the lofty philosophy and speculative freedom which give endurance and greatness to the classical style of his French contemporaries. In the main, in this age, in England, all discussion was fundamentally narrow. Except the terrible Hobbes, they all lack grand originality. Dryden, like the rest, is confined to the arguments and insults of sect and fashion. Their ideas were as small as their hatred was strong; no general doctrine opened up a poetical vista beyond the tumult of the strife; texts, traditions, a sad train of rigid reasoning, such were their arms; the same prejudices and passions exist in both parties. This is why the subject-matter fell below the art of writing. Dryden had no personal philosophy to develop; he does but versify themes given to him by others. In this sterility art soon is reduced to the clothing of foreign ideas, and the writer becomes an antiquarian or a translator. In reality, the greatest part of Dryden's poems are imitations, adaptations, or copies. He translated Persius and Vergil, with parts of Horace, Theocritus, Juvenal, Lucretius, and Homer, and put into modern English several tales of Boccaccio and Chaucer. These translations then appeared to be as great works as original compositions. When he took the Æneid in hand, the nation, as Johnson tells us, appeared to think its honor interested in the issue. Addison furnished him with the arguments of every book, and an essay on the Georgics; others supplied him with editions and notes; great lords vied with one another in offering him hospitality; subscriptions flowed in. They said that the English Vergil was to give England the Vergil of Rome. This work was long considered his highest glory. Even so at Rome, under Cicero, in the early dearth of national poetry, the translators of Greek works were as highly praised as the original authors.

This sterility of invention alters or depresses the taste. For

taste is an instinctive system, and leads us by internal maxims, which we ignore. The mind, guided by it, perceives connections, shuns discordances, enjoys or suffers, chooses or rejects, according to general conceptions which master it, but are not visible. These removed, we see the tact, which they engendered, disappear; the writer is clumsy, because philosophy fails him. Such is the imperfection of the stories handled by Dryden, from Boccaccio and Chaucer. Dryden does not see that fairy tales or tales of chivalry only suit a poetry in its infancy; that ingenuous subjects require an artless style; that the talk of Reynard and Chanticleer, the adventures of Palamon and Arcite, the transformations, tournaments, apparitions, need the astonished carelessness and the graceful gossip of old Chaucer. Vigorous periods, reflective antitheses, here oppress these amiable ghosts; classical phrases embarrass them in their too stringent embrace; they are lost to our sight; to find them again, we must go to their first parent, quit the too harsh light of a learned and manly age; we cannot pursue them fairly except in their first style in the dawn of credulous thought, under the mist which plays about their vague forms, with all the blushes and smiles of morning. Moreover, when Dryden comes on the scene, he crushes the delicacies of his master, hauling in tirades or reasonings, blotting out sincere and self-abandoning tenderness. What a difference between his account of Arcite's death and Chaucer's! How wretched are all his fine literary words, his gallantry, his symmetrical phrases, his cold regrets, compared to the cries of sorrow, the true outpouring, the deep love in Chaucer! But the worst fault is that almost everywhere he is a copyist, and retains the faults like a literal translator, with eyes glued on the work, powerless to comprehend and recast it, more a rhymester than a poet. When La Fontaine put Æsop or Boccaccio into verse, he breathed a new spirit into them; he took their matter only: the new soul, which constitutes the value of his work, is his, and only his; and this soul befits the work. In place of the Ciceronian periods of Boccaccio, we find slim, little lines, full of delicate raillery, dainty voluptuousness, feigned artlessness, which relish the forbidden fruit because it is fruit, and because it is forbidden. The tragic departs, the relics of the Middle Ages are a thousand leagues away; there remains nothing but the invidious gayety, Gallic and racy, as of a critic

and an epicurean. In Dryden, incongruities abound; and our author is so little shocked by them that he imports them elsewhere, in his theological poems, representing the Roman Catholic Church, for instance, as a hind, and the heresies by various animals, who dispute at as great length and as learnedly as Oxford graduates.[1] I like him no better in his Epistles; as a rule, they are but flatteries, almost always awkward, often mythological, interspersed with somewhat commonplace sentences. "I have studied Horace," he says, "and hope the style of his Epistles is not ill imitated here."[2] But don't believe him. Horace's Epistles, though in verse, are genuine letters, brisk, unequal in movement, always unstudied, natural. Nothing is further from Dryden than this original and thorough man of the world, philosophical and lewd,[3] this most refined and most nervous of epicureans, this kinsman (at eighteen centuries' distance) of Alfred de Musset and Voltaire. Like Horace, an author must be a thinker and a man of the world to write agreeable morality, and Dryden was no more than his contemporaries either a man of the world or a thinker.

But other characteristics, as eminently English, sustain him. Suddenly, in the midst of the yawns which these Epistles occasioned, our eyes are arrested. A true accent, new ideas, are brought out. Dryden, writing to his cousin, a country gentleman, has lighted on an English original subject. He depicts the life of a rural squire, the referee of his neighbors, who shuns lawsuits and town doctors, who keeps himself in health by hunting and exercise. Here is his portrait:

> "How bless'd is he, who leads a country life,
> Unvex'd with anxious cares, and void of strife! . . .
> With crowds attended of your ancient race,
> You seek the champaign sports, or sylvan chase;
> With well-breathed beagles you surround the wood,
> Even then industrious of the common good;
> And often have you brought the wily fox
> To suffer for the firstlings of the flocks;
> Chased even amid the folds, and made to bleed,
> Like felons, where they did the murderous deed.

[1] "Though Huguenots contemn our ordination,
Succession, ministerial vocation," etc.
("The Hind and the Panther," Part. ii. x. 166). Such are the harsh words we often find in his books.

[2] Preface to the "Religio Laici," x. 32.

[3] What Augustus says about Horace is charming, but cannot be quoted, even in Latin.

This fiery game your active youth maintain'd;
Not yet by years extinguish'd though restrain'd: . . .

"A patriot both the king and country serves;
Prerogative and privilege preserves:
Of each our laws the certain limit shows;
One must not ebb, nor t'other overflow;
Betwixt the prince and parliament we stand,
The barriers of the state on either hand;
May neither overflow, for then they drown the land
When both are full, they feed our bless'd abode;
Like those that water'd once the paradise of God.
Some overpoise of sway, by turns, they share;
In peace the people, and the prince in war:
Consuls of moderate power in calms were made;
When the Gauls came, one sole dictator sway'd.
Patriots, in peace, assert the people's right,
With noble stubbornness resisting might;
No lawless mandates from the court receive,
Nor lend by force, but in a body give." [4]

This serious converse shows a political mind, fed on the spectacle of affairs, having in the matter of public and practical debates the superiority which the French have in speculative discussions and social conversation. So, amidst the dryness of polemics break forth sudden splendors, a poetic fount, a prayer from the heart's depths; the English well of concentrated passion is on a sudden opened again with a flow and a spirit which Dryden does not elsewhere exhibit:

"Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wand'ring travellers,
Is reason to the soul: and as on high
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here; so Reason's glimm'ring ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere,
So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight,
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light." [5]

"But, gracious God! how well dost thou provide
For erring judgments an unerring guide!
Thy throne is darkness in th' abyss of light,
A blaze of glory that forbids the sight.

[4] Epistle 15, xi. 75.

[5] Beginning of "Religio Laici," x. 37.

O teach me to believe Thee thus conceal'd,
And search no farther than Thyself reveal'd;
But her alone for my director take,
Whom Thou hast promised never to forsake!
My thoughtless youth was wing'd with vain desires;
My manhood, long misled by wandering fires,
Follow'd false lights; and when their glimpse was gone,
My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
Such was I, such by nature still I am;
Be Thine the glory and be mine the shame!
Good life be now my task; my doubts are done." [6]

Such is the poetry of these serious minds. After having strayed in the debaucheries and pomps of the Restoration, Dryden found his way to the grave emotions of the inner life; though a Romanist, he felt like a Protestant the wretchedness of man and the presence of grace: he was capable of enthusiasm. Here and there a manly and soul-stirring verse discloses, in the midst of his reasonings, the power of conception and the inspiration of desire. When the tragic is met with, he takes to it as to his own domain; at need, he deals in the horrible. He has described the infernal chase, and the torture of the young girl worried by dogs, with the savage energy of Milton.[7] As a contrast, he loved nature: this taste always endures in England; the sombre, reflective passions are unstrung in the grand peace and harmony of the fields. Landscapes are to be met with amidst theological disputation:

"New blossoms flourish and new flowers arise,
As God had been abroad, and walking there
Had left his footsteps and reformed the year.
The sunny hills from far were seen to glow
With glittering beams, and in the meads below
The burnished brooks appeared with liquid gold to flow.
As last they heard the foolish Cuckoo sing,
Whose note proclaimed the holy day of spring." [8]

Under his regular versification the artist's soul is brought to light; [9] though contracted by habits of classical argument,

[6] "The Hind and the Panther," Part i. lines 64-75, x. 121.
[7] "Theodore and Honoria," xi. 435.
[8] "The Hind and the Panther," Part iii. lines 553-560, x. 214.
[9] "For her the weeping heavens become serene,
For her the ground is clad in cheerful green,
For her the nightingales are taught to sing,
And nature for her has delayed the spring."
These charming verses on the Duchess of York remind one of those of La Fontaine in "Le Songe," addressed to the Princess of Conti.

though stiffened by controversy and polemics, though unable to create souls or depict artless and delicate sentiments, he is a genuine poet: he is troubled, raised by beautiful sounds and forms; he writes boldly under the pressure of vehement ideas; he surrounds himself willingly with splendid images; he is moved by the buzzing of their swarms, the glitter of their splendors; he is, when he wishes it, a musician and a painter; he writes stirring airs, which shake all the senses, even if they do not sink deep into the heart. Such is his "Alexander's Feast," an ode in honor of St. Cecilia's day, an admirable trumpet-blast, in which metre and sound impress upon the nerves the emotions of the mind, a masterpiece of rapture and of art, which Victor Hugo alone has come up to.[10] Alexander is on his throne in the palace of Persepolis; the lovely Thais sat by his side; before him, in a vast hall, his glorious captains. And Timotheus sings:

"The praise of Bacchus, then, the sweet musician sung;
Of Bacchus ever fair, and ever young.
The jolly God in triumph comes;
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums;
Flush'd with a purple grace,
He shews his honest face.
Now, give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes,
Bacchus ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure;
Sweet is pleasure after pain."

And at the stirring sounds the king is troubled; his cheeks are glowing; his battles return to his memory; he defies heaven and earth. Then a sad song depresses him. Timotheus mourns the death of the betrayed Darius. Then a tender song softens him; Timotheus lauds the dazzling beauty of Thais. Suddenly he strikes the lyre again:

"A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark! the horrid sound

[10] For instance, in the "Chant du Cirque."

Has raised up his head;
As awaked from the dead,
And amazed, he stares around.
Revenge, revenge! Timotheus cries,
See the furies arise;
See the snakes, that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair!
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain:
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glittering temples of their hostile gods.—
The princes applaud, with a furious joy.
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy." [11]

Thus formerly music softened, exalted, mastered men; Dryden's verses acquire again their power in describing it.

Section X.—Misfortunes of Dryden's Old Age

This was one of his last works; [1] brilliant and poetical, it was born amidst the greatest sadness. The king for whom he had written was deposed and in exile; the religion which he had embraced was despised and oppressed; a Roman Catholic and a royalist, he was bound to a conquered party, which the nation resentfully and distrustfully considered as the natural enemy of liberty and reason. He had lost the two places which were his support; he lived wretchedly, burdened with a family, obliged to support his sons abroad; treated as a hireling by a coarse publisher, forced to ask him for money to pay for a watch which he could not get on credit, beseeching Lord Bolingbroke to protect him against Tonson's insults, rated by this shopkeeper when

11 "Alexander's Feast," xi. 183-188.

1 "Alexander's Feast" was written in 1697, soon after the publication of the Vergil. In 1699 appeared Dryden's translated tales and original poems, generally known as "The Fables," in which the portrait of the English country gentleman is to be found.—Tr.

the promised page was not finished on the stated day. His enemies persecuted him with pamphlets; the severe Collier lashed his comedies unfeelingly; he was damned without pity, but conscientiously. He had long been in ill health, crippled, constrained to write much, reduced to exaggerate flattery in order to earn from the great the indispensable money which the publishers would not give him:[2] "What Vergil wrote in the vigor of his age, in plenty and at ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years; struggling with wants, oppressed with sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write; and my judges, if they are not very equitable, already prejudiced against me, by the lying character which has been given them of my morals."[3] Although he looked at his conduct from the most favorable point of view, he knew that it had not always been worthy, and that all his writings would not endure. Born between two epochs, he had oscillated between two forms of life and two forms of thought, having reached the perfection of neither, having kept the faults of both; having discovered in surrounding manners no support worthy of his character, and in surrounding ideas no subject worthy of his talent. If he had founded criticism and good style, this criticism had only its scope in pedantic treatises or unconnected prefaces; this good style continued out of the track in inflated tragedies, dispersed over multiplied translations, scattered in occasional pieces, in odes written to order, in party poems, meeting only here and there an afflatus capable of employing it, and a subject capable of sustaining it. What gigantic efforts to end in such a moderate result! This is the natural condition of man. The end of everything is pain and agony. For a long time gravel and gout left him no peace; erysipelas seized one of his legs. In April, 1700, he tried to go out; "a slight inflammation in one of his toes became, from neglect, a gangrene;" the doctor would have tried amputation, but Dryden decided that what remained to him of health and happiness was not worth the pain. He died at the age of sixty-nine.

[2] He was paid two hundred and fifty guineas for ten thousand lines.

[3] Postscript of Vergil's Works, as translated by Dryden, xv. p. 187.

CHAPTER THIRD

THE REVOLUTION

Section I.—The Moral Revolution

WITH the constitution of 1688 a new spirit appears in England. Slowly, gradually, the moral revolution accompanies the social: man changes with the state, in the same sense and for the same causes; character moulds itself to the situation; and little by little, in manners and in literature, we see spring up a serious, reflective, moral spirit, capable of discipline and independence, which can alone maintain and give effect to a constitution.

Section II.—Brutality of the People.—Private Morals.—Chesterfield and Gay

This was not achieved without difficulty, and at first sight it seems as though England had gained nothing by this revolution of which she is so proud. The aspect of things under William, Anne, and the first two Georges, is repulsive. We are tempted to agree with Swift in his judgment, to say that if he has depicted a Yahoo, it is because he has seen him; naked or drawn in his carriage, the Yahoo is not beautiful. We see but corruption in high places, brutality in low, a band of intriguers leading a mob of brutes. The human beast, inflamed by political passions, gives vent to cries and violence, burns Admiral Byng in effigy, demands his death, would destroy his house and park, sways in turns from party to party, seems with its blind force ready to annihilate civil society. When Dr. Sacheverell was tried, the butcher boys, crossing-sweepers, chimney-sweepers, costermongers, drabs, the entire scum, conceiving the Church to be in danger, follow him with yells of rage and enthusiasm, and in the evening set to work to burn and pillage the dissenters' chapels. When Lord Bute, in defiance of public opinion, was set up in

Pitt's place, he was assailed with stones, and was obliged to surround his carriage with a strong guard. At every political crisis was heard a riotous growl, were seen disorder, blows, broken heads. It was worse when the people's own interests were at stake. Gin had been discovered in 1684, and about half a century later England consumed seven millions of gallons.[1] The tavernkeepers on their signboards invited people to come in and get drunk for a penny; for twopence they might get dead drunk; no charge for straw; the landlord dragged those who succumbed into a cellar, where they slept off their carouse. A man could not walk London streets without meeting wretches, incapable of motion or thought, lying in the kennel, whom the care of the passers-by alone could prevent from being smothered in mud, or run over by carriage wheels. A tax was imposed to stop this madness: it was in vain; the judges dared not condemn, the informers were assassinated. The House gave way, and Walpole, finding himself threatened with a riot, withdrew his law.[2] All these bewigged and ermined lawyers, these bishops in lace, these embroidered and gold-bedizened lords, this fine government so cleverly balanced, was carried on the back of a huge and formidable brute, which as a rule would tramp peacefully though growlingly on, but which on a sudden, for a mere whim, could shake and crush it. This was clearly seen in 1780, during the riots of Lord George Gordon. Without reason or guidance at the cry of No Popery the excited mob demolished the prisons, let loose the criminals, abused the Peers, and was for three days master of London, burning, pillaging, and glutting itself. Barrels of gin were staved in and made rivers in the streets. Children and women on their knees drank themselves to death. Some became mad, others fell down besotted, and the burning and falling houses killed them, and buried them under their ruins. Eleven years later, at Birmingham, the people sacked and gutted the houses of the Liberals and Dissenters, and were found next day in heaps, dead drunk, in the roads and ditches. When instinct rebels in this over-strong and well-fed race it becomes perilous. John Bull dashed headlong at the first red rag which he thought he saw.

The higher ranks were even less estimable than the lower.

[1] 1742, Report of Lord Lonsdale.

[2] In the present inflamed temper of the people, the Act could not be carried into execution without an armed force. —" Speech of Sir Robert Walpole."

If there has been no more beneficial revolution than that of 1688, there has been none that was launched or supported by dirtier means. Treachery was everywhere, not simple, but double and triple. Under William and Anne, admirals, ministers, members of the Privy Council, favorites of the antechamber, corresponded and conspired with the same Stuarts whom they had sold, only to sell them again, with a complication of bargains, each destroying the last, and a complication of perjuries, each surpassing the last, until in the end no one knew who had bought him, or to what party he belonged. The greatest general of the age, the Duke of Marlborough, is one of the basest rogues in history, supported by his mistresses, a niggard user of the pay which he received from them, systematically plundering his soldiers, trafficking on political secrets, a traitor to James II, to William, to England, betraying to James the intended plan of attacking Brest, and even, when old and infirm, walking from the public rooms in Bath to his lodgings, on a cold and dark night, to save sixpence in chair-hire. Next to him we may place Bolingbroke, a sceptic and cynic, minister in turn to Queen and Pretender, disloyal alike to both, a trafficker in consciences, marriages, and promises, who had squandered his talents in debauch and intrigue, to end in disgrace, impotence, and scorn.[3] Walpole, who used to boast that "every man had his price,"[4] was compelled to resign, after having been prime minister for twenty years. Montesquieu wrote in 1729:[5] "There are Scotch members who have only two hundred pounds for their vote, and sell it at this price. Englishmen are no longer worthy of their liberty. They sell it to the king; and if the king should sell it back to them, they would sell it him again." We read in Bubb Doddington's Diary the candid fashion and pretty contrivances of this great traffic. So Dr. King states: "He (Walpole) wanted to carry a question in the House of Commons, to which he knew there would be great opposition. . . . As he was passing through the Court of Requests, he met a member of the contrary party, whose avarice, he imagined, would not reject a large bribe. He took him aside and said, 'Such a question comes on this day; give me your vote, and here is a bank-

[3] See Walpole's terrible speech against him, 1734.

[4] See, for the truth of this statement, "Memoirs of Horace Walpole," 2 vols. ed. E. Warburton, 1851, i. 381, note.—Tr.

[5] Notes during a journey in England made in 1729 with Lord Chesterfield.

bill of two thousand pounds,' which he put into his hands. The member made him this answer: 'Sir Robert, you have lately served some of my particular friends; and when my wife was last at court, the King was very gracious to her, which must have happened at your instance. I should therefore think myself very ungrateful (putting the bank-bill into his pocket) if I were to refuse the favor you are now pleased to ask me.'" [6] This is how a man of the world did business. Corruption was so firmly established in public manners and in politics, that after the fall of Walpole, Lord Bute, who had denounced him, was obliged to practise and increase it. His colleague Henry Fox, the first Lord Holland, changed the pay-office into a market, haggled about their price with hundreds of members, distributed in one morning twenty-five thousand pounds. Votes were only to be had for cash down, and yet at an important crisis these mercenaries threatened to go over to the enemy, struck for wages, and demanded more. Nor did the leaders miss their own share. They sold themselves for, or paid themselves with, titles, dignities, sinecures. In order to get a place vacant, they gave the holder a pension of two, three, five, and even seven thousand a year. Pitt, the most upright of politicians, the leader of those who were called patriots, gave and broke his word, attacked or defended Walpole, proposed war or peace, all to become or to continue a minister. Fox, his rival, was a sort of shameless sink. The Duke of Newcastle, "whose name was perfidy," "a living, moving, talking caricature," the most clumsy, ignorant, ridiculed and despised of the aristocracy, was in the Cabinet for thirty years and premier for ten years, by virtue of his connections, his wealth, of the elections which he managed, and the places in his gift. The fall of the Stuarts put the government into the hands of a few great families which, by means of rotten boroughs, bought members and high-sounding speeches, oppressed the king, moulded the passions of the mob, intrigued, lied, wrangled, and tried to swindle each other out of power.

Private manners were as lovely as public. As a rule, the reigning king detested his son; this son got into debt, asked Parliament for an increased allowance, allied himself with his father's enemies. George I kept his wife in prison thirty-two

[6] Dr. W. King, "Political and Literary Anecdotes of his own Times," 1818, 27.

years, and got drunk every night with his two ugly mistresses. George II, who loved his wife, took mistresses to keep up appearances, rejoiced at his son's death, upset his father's will. His eldest son cheated at cards,[7] and one day at Kensington, having borrowed five thousand pounds from Bubb Doddington, said, when he saw him from the window: "That man is reckoned one of the most sensible men in England, yet with all his parts I have just nicked him out of five thousand pounds."[8] George IV was a sort of coachman, gamester, scandalous roisterer, unprincipled betting-man, whose proceedings all but got him excluded from the Jockey Club. The only upright man was George III, a poor half-witted dullard, who went mad, and whom his mother had kept locked up in his youth as though in a cloister. She gave as her reason the universal corruption of men of quality. "The young men," she said, "were all rakes; the young women made love, instead of waiting till it was made to them." In fact, vice was in fashion, not delicate vice as in France. "Money," wrote Montesquieu, "is here esteemed above everything, honor and virtue not much. An Englishman must have a good dinner, a woman, and money. As he does not go much into society, and limits himself to this, so, as soon as his fortune is gone, and he can no longer have these things, he commits suicide or turns robber." The young men had a superabundance of coarse energy, which made them mistake brutality for pleasure. The most celebrated called themselves Mohocks, and tyrannized over London by night. They stopped people, and made them dance by pricking their legs with their swords; sometimes they would put a woman in a tub, and set her rolling down a hill; others would place her on her head, with her feet in the air; some would flatten the nose of the wretch whom they had caught, and press his eyes out of their sockets. Swift, the comic writers, the novelists, have painted the baseness of this gross debauchery, craving for riot, living in drunkenness, revelling in obscenity, issuing in cruelty, ending by irreligion and atheism.[9] This violent and excessive mood requires to occupy itself proudly and daringly in the destruction of what men respect, and what institutions protect. These men at-

[7] Frederick died 1751. "Memoirs of Horace Walpole," i. 262.

[8] Walpole's "Memoirs of George II," ed. Lord Holland, 3 vols. 2d ed. 1847, i. 77.

[9] See the character of Birton in Voltaire's "Jenny."

tack the clergy by the same instinct which leads them to beat the watch. Collins, Tindal, Bolingbroke, are their teachers; the corruption of manners, the frequent practice of treason, the warring amongst sects, the freedom of speech, the progress of science, and the fermentation of ideas, seemed as if they would dissolve Christianity. "There is no religion in England," said Montesquieu. "Four or five in the House of Commons go to prayers or to the parliamentary sermon. . . . If anyone speaks of religion, everybody begins to laugh. A man happening to say, 'I believe this like an article of faith,' everybody burst out laughing." In fact, the phrase was provincial, and smacked of antiquity. The main thing was to be fashionable, and it is amusing to see from Lord Chesterfield in what this fashion consisted. Of justice and honor he only speaks transiently, and for form's sake. Before all, he says to his son, "have manners, good breeding, and the graces." He insists upon it in every letter, with a fulness and force of illustration which form an odd contrast: "*Mon cher ami, comment vont les grâces, les manières, les agréments, et tous ces petits riens si nécessaires pour rendre un homme aimable? Les prenez-vous? y faites-vous des progrès? . . . A propos, on m'assure que Madame de Blot sans avoir des traits, est jolie comme un cœur, et que nonobstant cela, elle s'en est tenue jusqu'ici scrupuleusement à son mari, quoiqu'il y ait déjà plus d'un an qu'elle est mariée. Elle n'y pense pas.*" [10] . . . "It seems ridiculous to tell you, but it is most certainly true, that your dancing-master is at this time the man in all Europe of the greatest importance to you." [11] . . . "In your person you must be accurately clean; and your teeth, hands, and nails should be superlatively so. . . . Upon no account whatever put your fingers in your nose or ears.[12] What says Madame Dupin to you? For an attachment I should prefer her to *la petite* Blot.[13] . . . Pleasing women may in time be of service to you. They often please and govern others." [14]

And he quotes to him as examples, Bolingbroke and Marlborough, the two worst *roués* of the age. Thus speaks a serious man, once Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and ambassador and

[10] The original letter is in French. Chesterfield's "Letters to his Son," ed. Mahon, 4 vols. 1845; ii. April 15, 1751, p. 127.

[11] Ibid. ii. January 3, 1751, p. 72.
[12] Ibid. ii. November 12, 1750, p. 57.
[13] Ibid. ii. May 16, 1751, p. 146.
[14] Ibid. ii. January 21, 1751, p. 81.

plenipotentiary, and finally a Secretary of State, an authority in matters of education and taste.[15] He wishes to polish his son, to give to him a French air, to add to solid diplomatic knowledge and large views of ambition an engaging, lively, and frivolous manner. This outward polish, which at Paris is of the true color, is here but a shocking veneer. This transplanted politeness is a lie, this vivacity is want of sense, this worldly education seems fitted only to make actors and rogues.

So thought Gay in his "Beggars' Opera," and the polished society applauded with *furore* the portrait which he drew of it. Sixty-three consecutive nights the piece ran amidst a tempest of laughter; the ladies had the songs written on their fans, and the principal actress married a duke. What a satire! Thieves infested London, so that in 1728 the queen herself was almost robbed; they formed bands, with officers, a treasury, a commander-in-chief, and multiplied, though every six weeks they were sent by the cartload to the gallows. Such was the society which Gay put on the stage. In his opinion, it was as good as the higher society; it was hard to discriminate between them; the manners, wit, conduct, morality in both were alike. "Through the whole piece you may observe such a similitude of manners in high and low life, that it is difficult to determine whether (in the fashionable vices) the fine gentlemen imitate the gentlemen of the road, or the gentlemen of the road the fine gentlemen." [16]

Wherein, for example, is Peachum different from a great minister? Like him, he is a leader of a gang of thieves; like him, he has a register for thefts; like him, he receives money with both hands; like him, he contrives to have his friends caught and hanged when they trouble him; he uses, like him, parliamentary language and classical comparisons; he has, like him, gravity, steadiness, and is eloquently indignant when his honor is suspected. It is true that Peachum quarrels with a comrade

[15] "They (the English) are commonly twenty years old before they have spoken to anybody above their schoolmaster and the fellows of their college. If they happen to have learning, it is only Greek and Latin, but not one word of modern history or modern languages. Thus prepared, they go abroad, as they call it; but, in truth, they stay at home all that while: for, being very awkward, confoundedly ashamed, and not speaking the languages, they go into no foreign company, at least none good; but dine and sup with one another only at the tavern."—"Chesterfield's Letters to his Son," i. May 10 (O. S.) 1748, p. 136. "I could wish you would ask him (Mr. Burrish) for some letters to young fellows of pleasure or fashionable coquettes, that you may be dans l'honnete débauche de Munich."—Ibid. ii. October 3, 1753, p. 331.

[16] Speech of the Beggar in the Epilogue of the "Beggars' Opera."

about the plunder, and takes him by the throat. But lately, Sir Robert Walpole and Lord Townsend had fought with each other on a similar question. Listen to what Mrs. Peachum says of her daughter: "Love him! (Macheath), worse and worse! I thought the girl had been better bred." [17] The daughter observes: "A woman knows how to be mercenary though she has never been in a court or at an assembly." [18] And the father remarks: "My daughter to me should be, like a court lady to a minister of state, a key to the whole gang." [19] As to Macheath, he is a fit son-in-law for such a politician. If less brilliant in council than in action, that only suits his age. Point out a young and noble officer who has a better address, or performs finer actions. He is a highwayman, that is his bravery; he shares his booty with his friends, that is his generosity: "You see, gentlemen, I am not a mere court-friend, who professes everything and will do nothing. . . . But we, gentlemen, have still honour enough to break through the corruptions of the world." [20] For the rest he is gallant; he has half a dozen wives, a dozen children; he frequents stews, he is amiable towards the beauties whom he meets, he is easy in manners, he makes elegant bows to everyone, he pays compliments to all: "Mistress Slemmekin! as careless and genteel as ever! all you fine ladies, who know your own beauty affect undress. . . . If any of the ladies chuse gin, I hope they will be so free as to call for it. Indeed, sir, I never drink strong waters, but when I have the colic. —Just the excuse of the fine ladies! why, a lady of quality is never without the colic." [21] Is this not the genuine tone of good society? And does anyone doubt that Macheath is a man of quality when we learn that he has deserved to be hanged, and is not? Everything yields to such a proof. If, however, we wish for another, he would add that, "As to conscience and musty morals, I have as few drawbacks upon my pleasures as any man of quality in England; in those I am not at least vulgar." [22] After such a speech a man must give in. Do not bring up the foulness of these manners; we see that there is nothing repulsive in them, because fashionable society likes them. These interiors of prisons and stews, these gambling-houses, this whiff of gin,

[17] Gay's Plays, 1772; "The Beggars' Opera," i. 1.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid. iii. 2.
[21] Ibid. ii. 1.
[22] I cannot find these lines in the edition I have consulted.—Tr.

this pander-traffic, and these pickpockets' calculations, by no means disgust the ladies, who applaud from the boxes. They sing the songs of Polly; their nerves shrink from no details; they have already inhaled the filthy odors from the highly polished pastorals of the amiable poet.[23] They laugh to see Lucy show her pregnancy to Macheath, and give Polly "rat-bane." They are familiar with all the refinements of the gallows, and all the niceties of medicine. Mistress Trapes expounds her trade before them, and complains of having "eleven fine customers now down under the surgeon's hands." Mr. Filch, a prison-prop, uses words which cannot even be quoted. A cruel keenness, sharpened by a stinging irony, flows through the work, like one of those London streams whose corrosive smells Swift and Gay have described: more than a hundred years later it still proclaims the dishonour of the society which is bespattered and befouled with its mire.

Section III.—Principles of Civilization in France and England

These were but the externals; and close observers, like Voltaire, did not misinterpret them. Betwixt the slime at the bottom and the scum on the surface rolled the great national river, which, purified by its own motion, already at intervals gave signs of its true color, soon to display the powerful regularity of its course and the wholesome limpidity of its waters. It advanced in its native bed; every nation has one of its own, which flows down its proper slope. It is this slope which gives to each civilization its degree and form, and it is this which we must endeavor to describe and measure.

To this end we have only to follow the travellers from the two countries who at this time crossed the channel. Never did England regard and imitate France more, nor France England. To see the distinct current in which each nation flowed, we have but to open our eyes. Lord Chesterfield writes to his son:

"It must be owned, that the polite conversation of the men and women at Paris, though not always very deep, is much less futile and

[23] In these Eclogues the ladies explain in good style that their friends have their lackeys for lovers: "Her favours Sylvia shares amongst mankind; such gen'rous Love could never be confin'd." Elsewhere the servant girl says to her mistress: "Have you not fancy'd, in his frequent kiss, th' ungrateful leavings of a filthy miss?"

frivolous than ours here. It turns at least upon some subject, something of taste, some point of history, criticism, and even philosophy, which, though probably not quite so solid as Mr. Locke's, is however better, and more becoming rational beings, than our frivolous dissertations upon the weather or upon whist." [1]

In fact, the French became civilized by conversation; not so the English. As soon as the Frenchman quits mechanical labor and coarse material life, even before he quits it, he converses: this is his goal and his pleasure.[2] Barely has he escaped from religious wars and feudal isolation, when he makes his bow and has his way. With the Hôtel de Rambouillet we get the fine drawing-room talk, which is to last two centuries: Germans, English, all Europe, either novices or dullards, listen to France open-mouthed, and from time to time clumsily attempt an imitation. How amiable are French talkers! What discrimination! What innate tact! With what grace and dexterity they can persuade, interest, amuse, stroke down sickly vanity, rivet the diverted attention, insinuate dangerous truth, ever soaring a hundred feet above the tedium-point where their rivals are floundering with all their native heaviness. But, above all, how sharp they soon have become! Instinctively and without effort they light upon easy gesture, fluent speech, sustained elegance, a characteristic piquancy, a perfect clearness. Their phrases, still formal under Guez de Balzac, are looser, lighter, launch out, move speedily, and under Voltaire find their wings. Did any man ever see such a desire, such an art of pleasing? Pedantic sciences, political economy, theology, the sullen denizens of the Academy and the Sorbonne, speak but in epigrams. Montesquieu's " Esprit des Lois " is also " Esprit sur les lois." Rousseau's periods, which begat a revolution, were balanced, turned, polished for eighteen hours in his head. Voltaire's philosophy breaks out into a million sparks. Every idea must blossom into a witticism; people only have flashes of thought; all truth, the most intricate and the most sacred, becomes a pleasant drawing-room conceit, thrown backward and forward, like a gilded shut-

[1] Chesterfield's Letters, ii. April 22 (O. S.) 1751, p. 131. See, for a contrast, Swift's "Essay on Polite Conversation."

[2] Even in 1826, Sydney Smith, arriving at Calais, writes (" Life and Letters," ii. 253, 254): " What pleases me is the taste and ingenuity displayed in the shops, and the good manners and politeness of the people. Such is the state of manners, that you appear almost to have quitted a land of barbarians. I have not seen a cobbler who is not better bred than an English gentleman."

tlecock, by delicate women's hands, without sullying the lace sleeves from which their slim arms emerge, or the garlands which the rosy Cupids unfold on the wainscoting. Everything must glitter, sparkle, or smile. The passions are deadened, love is rendered insipid, the proprieties are multiplied, good manners are exaggerated. The fine man becomes "sensitive." From his wadded taffeta dressing-gown he keeps plucking his worked handkerchief to whisk away the moist omen of a tear; he lays his hand on his heart, he grows tender; he has become so delicate and correct, that an Englishman knows not whether to take him for a hysterical young woman or a dancing-master.[3] Take a near view of this beribboned puppy, in his light-green dress, lisping out the songs of Florian. The genius of society which has led him to these fooleries has also led him elsewhere; for conversation, in France at least, is a chase after ideas. To this day, in spite of modern distrust and sadness, it is at table, after dinner, over the coffee especially, that deep politics and the loftiest philosophy crop up. To think, above all to think rapidly, is a recreation. The mind finds in it a sort of ball; think how eagerly it hastens thither. This is the source of all French culture. At the dawn of the century, the ladies, between a couple of bows, produced studied portraits and subtle dissertations; they understand Descartes, appreciate Nicole, approve Bossuet. Presently little suppers are introduced, and during the dessert they discuss the existence of God. Are not theology, morality, set forth in a noble or piquant style, pleasures for the drawing-room and adornments of luxury? Fancy finds place amongst them, floats about and sparkles like a light flame over all the subjects on which it feeds. How lofty a flight did intelligence take during this eighteenth century! Was society ever more anxious for sublime truths, more bold in their search, more quick to discover, more ardent in embracing them? These perfumed *marquises*, these laced coxcombs, all these pretty, well-dressed, gallant, frivolous people, crowd to hear philosophy discussed, as they go to hear an opera. The origin of animated beings, the

[3] See in "Evelina," by Miss Burney, 3 vols. 1784, the character of the poor, genteel Frenchman, M. Dubois, who is made to tremble even whilst lying in the gutter. These very correct young ladies go to see Congreve's "Love for Love"; their parents are not afraid of showing them Miss Prue. See also, in "Evelina," by way of contrast, the boorish character of the English captain; he throws Mrs. Duval twice in the mud; he says to his daughter Molly: "I charge you, as you value my favour, that you'll never again be so impertinent as to have a taste of your own before my face" (i. 190). The change, even from sixty years ago, is surprising.

eels of Needham,[4] the adventures of Jacques the Fatalist,[5] and the question of free-will, the principles of political economy, and the calculations of the "Man with Forty Crowns"[6]—all is to them a matter for paradoxes and discoveries. All the heavy rocks, which the men who have made it their business, were hewing and undermining laboriously in solitude, being carried along and polished in the public torrent, roll in myriads, mingled together with a joyous clatter, hurried onwards with an ever-increasing rapidity. There was no bar, no collision; they were not checked by the practicability of their plans: they thought for thinking's sake; theories could be expanded at ease. In fact, this is how in France men have always conversed. They play with general truths; they glean one nimbly from the heap of facts in which it lay concealed, and develop it, they hover above observation in reason and rhetoric; they find themselves uncomfortable and commonplace when they are not in the region of pure ideas. And in this respect the eighteenth century continues the seventeenth. The philosophers had described good breeding, flattery, misanthropy, avarice; they now instituted inquiries into liberty, tyranny, religion; they had studied man in himself; they now study him in the abstract. Religious and monarchical writers are of the same school as impious and revolutionary writers; Boileau leads up to Rousseau, Racine to Robespierre. Oratorical reasoning formed the regular theatre and classical preaching; it also produced the Declaration of Rights and the "Contrat Social." They form for themselves a certain idea of man, of his inclinations, faculties, duties; a mutilated idea, but the more clear as it was the more reduced. From being aristocratic it becomes popular; instead of being an amusement, it is a faith; from delicate and sceptical hands it passes to coarse and enthusiastic hands. From the lustre of the drawing-room they make a brand and a torch. Such is the current on which the French mind floated for two centuries, caressed by the refinements of an exquisite politeness, amused by a swarm of brilliant ideas, charmed by the promises of golden theories, until, thinking that it touched the cloud-palace, made bright by the future, it suddenly lost its footing and fell in the storm of the Revolution.

[4] Needham (1713-1781), a learned English naturalist, made and published microscopical discoveries and remarks on the generation of organic bodies.—Tr.

[5] The title of a philosophical novel by Diderot.—Tr.

[6] The title of a philosophical tale by Voltaire.—Tr.

Altogether different is the path which English civilization has taken. It is not the spirit of society which has made it, but moral sense; and the reason is that in England man is not as he is in France. The Frenchmen who became acquainted with England at this period were struck by it. "In France," says Montesquieu, "I become friendly with everybody; in England with nobody. You must do here as the English do, live for yourself, care for no one, love no one, rely on no one." Englishmen were of a singular genius, yet "solitary and sad. They are reserved, live much in themselves, and think alone. Most of them having wit, are tormented by their very wit. Scorning or disgusted with all things, they are unhappy amid so many reasons why they should not be so." And Voltaire, like Montesquieu, continually alludes to the sombre energy of the English character. He says that in London there are days when the wind is in the east, when it is customary for people to hang themselves; he relates shudderingly how a young girl cut her throat, and how her lover without a word redeemed the knife. He is surprised to see "so many Timons, so many splenetic misanthropes." Whither will they go? There was one path which grew daily wider. The Englishman, naturally serious, meditative, and sad, did not regard life as a game or a pleasure; his eyes were habitually turned, not outward to smiling nature, but inward to the life of the soul; he examines himself, ever descends within himself, confines himself to the moral world, and at last sees no other beauty but that which shines there; he enthrones justice as the sole and absolute queen of humanity, and conceives the plan of disposing all his actions according to a rigid code. He has no lack of force in this; for his pride comes to assist his conscience. Having chosen himself and by himself the route, he would blush to quit it; he rejects temptations as his enemies; he feels that he is fighting and conquering,[7] that he is doing a difficult thing, that he is worthy of admiration, that he is a man. Moreover, he rescues himself from his capital foe, tedium, and satisfies his craving for action; understanding his duties, he employs his faculties and he has a purpose in life, and this gives rise to associations, endowments, preachings; and finding more steadfast souls, and nerves more tightly strung, it sends them forth, without causing

[7] "The consciousness of silent endurance, so dear to every Englishman, of standing out against something and not giving in."—"Tom Brown's School Days."

them too much suffering, too long strife, through ridicule and danger. The reflective character of the man has given a moral rule; the militant character now gives moral force. The mind, thus directed, is more apt than any other to comprehend duty; the will, thus armed, is more capable than any other of performing its duty. This is the fundamental faculty which is found in all parts of public life, concealed but present, like one of those deep primeval rocks, which, lying far inland, give to all undulations of the soil a basis and a support.

Section IV.—Religion

This faculty gives first a basis and a support to Protestantism, and it is from this structure of mind that the Englishman is religious. Let us find our way through the knotty and uninviting bark. Voltaire laughs at it, and jests about the ranting of the preachers and the austerity of the faithful. "There is no opera, no comedy, no concert on a Sunday in London; cards even are expressly forbidden, so that only persons of quality, and those who are called respectable people, play on that day." He amuses himself at the expense of the Anglicans, "so scrupulous in collecting their tithes"; the Presbyterians, "who look as if they were angry, and preach with a strong nasal accent"; the Quakers, "who go to church and wait for inspiration with their hats on their heads." But is there nothing to be observed but these externals? And do we suppose that we are acquainted with a religion because we know the details of formulary and vestment? There is a common faith beneath all these sectarian differences: whatever be the form of Protestantism, its object and result are the culture of the moral sense; that is why it is popular in England: principles and dogmas all make it suitable to the instincts of the nation. The sentiment which ... the Protestant is the source of everything, is qualms of conscience; he pictures perfect justice, and feels that his uprightness, however great, cannot stand before that. He thinks of the Day of Judgment, and tells himself that he will be damned. He is troubled, and prostrates himself; he prays God to pardon his sins and renew his heart. He sees that neither by his desires, nor his deeds, nor by any ceremony or institution, nor by himself, nor

by any creature, can he deserve the one or obtain the other. He betakes himself to Christ, the one Mediator; he prays to him, he feels his presence, he finds himself justified by his grace, elect, healed, transformed, predestinated. Thus understood, religion is a moral revolution; thus simplified, religion is only a moral revolution. Before this deep emotion, metaphysics and theology, ceremonies and discipline, all is blotted out or subordinate, and Christianity is simply the purification of the heart. Look now at these men, dressed in sombre colors, speaking through the nose on Sundays, in a box of dark wood, whilst a man in bands, "with the air of a Cato," reads a psalm. Is there nothing in their heart but theological "trash" or mechanical phrases? There is a deep sentiment—veneration. This bare Dissenters' meeting-house, this simple service and church of the Anglicans, leave them open to the impression of what they read and hear. For they do hear, and they do read; prayer in the vulgar tongue, psalms translated into the vulgar tongue, can penetrate through their senses to their souls. They do penetrate; and this is why they have such a collected mien. For the race is by its very nature capable of deep emotions, disposed by the vehemence of its imagination to comprehend the grand and tragic; and the Bible, which is to them the very word of eternal God, provides it. I know that to Voltaire it is only emphatic, unconnected, ridiculous; the sentiments with which it is filled are out of harmony with French sentiments. In England the hearers are on the level of its energy and harshness. The cries of anguish or admiration of the solitary Hebrew, the transports, the sudden outbursts of sublime passion, the desire for justice, the growling of the thunder and the judgments of God, shake, across thirty centuries, these Biblical souls. Their other books assist it. The Prayer Book, which is handed down as an heirloom with the old family Bible, speaks to all, to the dullest peasant, or the miner, the solemn accent of true prayer. The new-born poetry, the reviving religion of the sixteenth century, have impressed their magnificent gravity upon it; and we feel in it, as in Milton himself, the pulse of the twofold inspiration which then lifted a man out of himself and raised him to heaven. Their knees bend when they listen to it. That Confession of Faith, these collects for the sick, for the dying, in case of public misfortune or private grief, these lofty sentences of impassioned and sustained eloquence,

transport a man to some unknown and august world. Let the fine gentlemen yawn, mock, and succeed in not understanding: I am sure that, of the others, many are moved. The idea of dark death and of the limitless ocean, to which the poor weak soul must descend, the thought of this invisible justice, everywhere present, ever foreseeing, on which the changing show of visible things depends, enlighten them with unexpected flashes. The physical world and its laws seem to them but a phantom and a figure; they see nothing more real than justice; it is the sum of humanity, as of nature. This is the deep sentiment which on Sunday closes the theatre, discourages pleasures, fills the churches; this it is which pierces the breastplate of the positive spirit and of corporeal dulness. This shopkeeper, who all the week has been counting his bales or drawing up columns of figures; this cattle-breeding squire, who can only bawl, drink, jump a fence; these yeomen, these cottagers, who in order to amuse themselves draw blood whilst boxing, or vie with each other in grinning through a horse-collar—all these uncultivated souls, immersed in material life, receive thus from their religion a moral life. They love it; we hear it in the yells of a mob, rising like a thunderstorm, when a rash hand touches or seems to touch the Church. We see it in the sale of Protestant devotional books; the "Pilgrim's Progress" and "The Whole Duty of Man" are alone able to force their way to the window-ledge of the yeoman and squire, where four volumes, their whole library, rest amid the fishing-tackle. We can only move the men of this race by moral reflections and religious emotions. The cooled Puritan spirit still broods underground, and is drawn in the only direction where fuel, air, fire, and action are to be found.

We obtain a glimpse of it when we look at the sects. In France, Jansenists and Jesuits seem to be puppets of another century, fighting for the amusement of this age. Here Quakers, Independents, Baptists exist, serious, honored, recognized by the State, distinguished by their able writers, their deep scholars, their men of worth, their founders of nations.[1] Their piety causes their disputes; it is because they will believe that they differ in belief: the only men without religion are those who do not care for religion. A motionless faith is soon a dead faith; and when a man becomes a sectarian, it is because he is fervent.

[1] William Penn.

This Christianity lives because it is developed; we see the sap, always flowing from the Protestant inquiry and faith, re-enter the old dogmas, dried up for fifteen hundred years. Voltaire, when he came to England, was surprised to find Arians, and amongst them the first thinkers in England—Clarke, Newton himself. Not only dogma, but feeling, is renewed; beyond the speculative Arians were the practical Methodists; behind Newton and Clarke came Whitefield and Wesley.

No history more deeply illustrates the English character than that of these two men. In spite of Hume and Voltaire, they founded a monastical and convulsionary sect, and triumph through austerity, and exaggeration, which would have ruined them in France. Wesley was a scholar, an Oxford student, and he believed in the devil; he attributes to him sickness, nightmare, storms, earthquakes. His family heard supernatural noises; his father had been thrice pushed by a ghost; he himself saw the hand of God in the commonest events of life. One day at Birmingham, overtaken by a hailstorm, he felt that he received this warning, because at table he had not sufficiently exhorted the people who dined with him; when he had to determine on anything, he opened the Bible at random for a text, in order to decide. At Oxford he fasted and wearied himself until he spat blood and almost died; at sea, when he departed for America, he only ate bread, and slept on deck; he lived the life of an apostle, giving away all that he earned, travelling and preaching all the year, and every year, till the age of eighty-eight;[2] it has been reckoned that he gave away thirty thousand pounds, travelled about a hundred thousand miles, and preached forty thousand sermons. What could such a man have done in France in the eighteenth century? Here he was listened to and followed, at his death he had eighty thousand disciples; now he has a million. The qualms of conscience, which forced him in this direction, compelled others to follow in his footsteps. Nothing is more striking than the confessions of his preachers, mostly low-born and laymen. George Story had the spleen, dreamed and mused gloomily; took to slandering himself and the occupations of men. Mark Bond thought himself damned, because

[2] On one tour he slept three weeks on the bare boards. One day, at three in the morning, he said to Nelson, his companion: "Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer, I have one whole side yet; for the skin is off but on one side." —Southey's "Life of Wesley," 2 vols. 1820, ii. ch. xv. 54.

when a boy he had once uttered a blasphemy; he read and prayed unceasingly and in vain, and at last in despair he enlisted, with the hope of being killed. John Haime had visions, howled, and thought he saw the devil. Another, a baker, had scruples because his master continued to bake on Sunday, wasted away with anxiety, and soon was nothing but a skeleton. Such are the timorous and impassioned souls which become religious and enthusiastic. They are numerous in this land, and on them doctrine took hold. Wesley declares that "A string of opinions is no more Christian faith than a string of beads is Christian holiness. It is not an assent to any opinion, or any number of opinions." "This justifying faith implies not only the personal revelation, the inward evidence of Christianity, but likewise a sure and firm confidence in the individual believer that Christ died for *his* sin, loved *him*, and gave his life for *him*." [3] "By a Christian, I mean one who so believes in Christ, as that sin hath no more dominion over him." [4]

The faithful feels in himself the touch of a superior hand, and the birth of an unknown being. The old man has disappeared, the new man has taken his place, pardoned, purified, transfigured, steeped in joy and confidence, inclined to good as strongly as he was once drawn to evil. A miracle has been wrought, and it can be wrought at any moment, suddenly, under any circumstances, without warning. Some sinner, the oldest and most hardened, without wishing it, without having dreamed of it, falls down weeping, his heart melted by grace. The hidden thoughts, which fermented long in these gloomy imaginations, break out suddenly into storms, and the dull brutal mood is shaken by nervous fits which it had not known before. Wesley, Whitefield, and their preachers went all over England preaching to the poor, the peasants, the workmen in the open air, sometimes to a congregation of twenty thousand people. "The fire is kindled in the country." There was sobbing and crying. At Kingswood, Whitefield, having collected the miners, a savage race, "saw the white gutters made by the tears which plentifully fell down from their black cheeks, black as they came out from their coal-pits." [5] Some trembled and fell; others had transports of joy, ecstasies. Southey writes thus of Thomas Olivers: "His heart was broken, nor could he express the strong desires which

[3] Southey's "Life of Wesley," ii. 176. [4] Ibid. i. 251. [5] Ibid. i. ch. vi. 236.

he felt for righteousness. . . . He describes his feelings during a *Te Deum* at the cathedral, as if he had done with earth, and was praising God before His throne." [6] The god and the brute, which each man carries in himself, were let loose; the physical machine was upset; emotion was turned into madness, and the madness became contagious. An eye-witness says:

"At Everton some were shrieking, some roaring aloud. . . . The most general was a loud breathing, like that of people half strangled and gasping for life; and, indeed, almost all the cries were like those of human creatures dying in bitter anguish. Great numbers wept without any noise; others fell down as dead. . . . I stood upon the pew-seat, as did a young man in the opposite pew, an able-bodied, fresh, healthy countryman, but in a moment, when he seemed to think of nothing else, down he dropt, with a violence inconceivable. . . . I heard the stamping of his feet, ready to break the boards, as he lay in strong convulsions at the bottom of the pew. . . . I saw a sturdy boy, about eight years old, who roared above his fellows; . . . his face was red as scarlet; and almost all on whom God laid his hand, turned either very red or almost black." [7]

Elsewhere, a woman, disgusted with this madness, wished to leave, but had only gone a few steps when she fell into as violent fits as others. Conversions followed these transports; the converted paid their debts, foreswore drunkenness, read the Bible, prayed, and went about exhorting others. Wesley collected them into societies, formed "classes" for mutual examination and edification, submitted spiritual life to a methodic discipline, built chapels, chose preachers, founded schools, organized enthusiasm. To this day his disciples spend very large sums every year in missions to all parts of the world, and on the banks of the Mississippi and the Ohio their shoutings repeat the violent enthusiasm and the conversions of primitive inspiration. The same instinct is still revealed by the same signs; the doctrine of grace survives in uninterrupted energy, and the race, as in the sixteenth century, puts its poetry into the exaltation of the moral sense.

[6] Southey's "Life of Wesley," ii. ch. xvii. 111.

[7] Ibid. ii. ch. xxiv. 320.

Section V.—The Pulpit

A sort of theological smoke covers and hides this glowing hearth which burns in silence. A stranger who, at this time, had visited the country, would see in this religion only a choking vapor of arguments, controversies, and sermons. All those celebrated divines and preachers, Barrow, Tillotson, South, Stillingfleet, Sherlock, Burnet, Baxter, Barclay, preached, says Addison, like automatons, monotonously, without moving their arms. For a Frenchman, for Voltaire, who did read them, as he read everything, what a strange reading! Here is Tillotson first, the most authoritative of all, a kind of father of the Church, so much admired that Dryden tells us that he learned from him the art of writing well, and that his sermons, the only property which he left his widow, were bought by a publisher for two thousand five hundred guineas. This work has, in fact, some weight; there are three folio volumes, each of seven hundred pages. To open them, a man must be a critic by profession, or be possessed by an absolute desire to be saved. And now let us open them. "The Wisdom of being Religious"—such is his first sermon, much celebrated in his time, and the foundation of his success:

"These words consist of two propositions, which are not distinct in sense; . . . So that they differ only as cause and effect, which by a metonymy, used in all sorts of authors, are frequently put one for another." [1]

This opening makes us uneasy. Is this great orator a teacher of grammar?

"Having thus explained the words, I come now to consider the proposition contained in them, which is this:

"That religion is the best knowledge and wisdom.

"This I shall endeavour to make good these three ways:—

"1st. By a direct proof of it;

"2d. By shewing on the contrary the folly and ignorance of irreligion and wickedness;

"3d. By vindicating religion from those common imputations which seem to charge it with ignorance or imprudence. I begin with the direct proof of this. . . ." [2]

[1] Tillotson's Sermons, 10 vols. 1760, i. 1. [2] Ibid. i. 5.

Thereupon he gives his divisions. What a heavy demonstrator! We are tempted to turn over the leaves only, and not to read them. Let us examine his forty-second sermon: "Against Evil-speaking:"

"Firstly: I shall consider the nature of this vice, and wherein it consists.

"Secondly: I shall consider the due extent of this prohibition, To speak evil of no man.

"Thirdly: I shall show the evil of this practice, both in the causes and effects of it.

"Fourthly: I shall add some further considerations to dissuade men from it.

"Fifthly: I shall give some rules and directions for the prevention and cure of it." [3]

What a style! and it is the same throughout. There is nothing lifelike; it is a skeleton, with all its joints coarsely displayed. All the ideas are ticketed and numbered. The schoolmen were not worse. Neither rapture nor vehemence; no wit, no imagination, no original and brilliant idea, no philosophy; nothing but quotations of mere scholarship, and enumerations from a handbook. The dull argumentative reason comes with its pigeonholed classifications upon a great truth of the heart or an impassioned word from the Bible, examines it "positively and negatively," draws thence "a lesson and an encouragement," arranges each part under its heading, patiently, indefatigably, so that sometimes three whole sermons are needed to complete the division and the proof, and each of them contains in its exordium the methodical abstract of all the points treated and the arguments supplied. Just so were the discussions of the Sorbonne carried on. At the court of Louis XIV Tillotson would have been taken for a man who had run away from a seminary. Voltaire would have called him a village curé. He has all that is necessary to shock men of the world, nothing to attract them. For he does not address men of the world, but Christians; his hearers neither need nor desire to be goaded or amused; they do not ask for analytical refinements, novelties in matter of feeling. They come to have Scripture explained to them, and morality demonstrated. The force of their zeal is only manifested by the gravity of their attention. Let others have a text as a mere

[3] Tillotson's Sermons, iii. 2.

pretext; as for them, they cling to it: it is the very word of God, they cannot dwell on it too much. They must have the sense of every word hunted out, the passage interpreted phrase by phrase, in itself, by the context, by parallel passages, by the whole doctrine. They are willing to have the different readings, translations, interpretations expounded; they like to see the orator become a grammarian, a Hellenist, a scholiast. They are not repelled by all this dust of scholarship, which rises from the folios to settle upon their countenance. And the precept being laid down, they demand an enumeration of all the reasons which support it; they wish to be convinced, carry away in their heads a provision of good approved motives to last the week. They came there seriously, as to their counting-house or their field, not to amuse themselves, but to do some work, to toil and dig conscientiously in theology and logic, to amend and better themselves. They would be angry at being dazzled. Their great sense, their ordinary common-sense, is much better pleased with cold discussions; they want inquiries and methodical reports of morality, as if it was a subject of export and import duties, and treat conscience as port wine or herrings.

In this Tillotson is admirable. Doubtless he is pedantic, as Voltaire called him; he has all "the bad manners learned at the university"; he has not been "polished by association with women"; he is not like the French preachers, academicians, elegant discoursers, who by a courtly air, a well-delivered Advent sermon, the refinements of a purified style, earn the first vacant bishopric and the favor of good society. But he writes like a perfectly honest man; we can see that he is not aiming in any way at the glory of an orator; he wishes to persuade soundly, nothing more. We enjoy this clearness, this naturalness, this preciseness, this entire loyalty. In one of his sermons he says:

"Truth and reality have all the advantages of appearance and many more. If the show of anything be good for anything, I am sure sincerity is better; for why does any man dissemble, or seem to be that which he is not, but because he thinks it good to have such a quality as he pretends to? For to counterfeit and dissemble, is to put on the appearance of some real excellency. Now, the best way in the world for a man to seem to be anything, is really to be what he would seem to be. Besides, that it is many times as troublesome to make good the pretence of a good quality, as to have it; and if a man have it not, it is ten to one but he is discovered to want it, and then all his pains and

labour to seem to have it are lost. There is something unnatural in painting, which a skilful eye will easily discern from native beauty and complexion.

"It is hard to personate and act a part long; for where truth is not at the bottom, nature will always be endeavouring to return, and will peep out and betray herself one time or other. Therefore, if a man think it convenient to seem good, let him be so indeed, and then his goodness will appear to everybody's satisfaction; . . . so that, upon all accounts, sincerity is true wisdom." [4]

We are led to believe a man who speaks thus; we say to ourselves, "This is true, he is right, we must do as he says." The impression received is moral, not literary; the sermon is efficacious, not rhetorical; it does not please, it leads to action.

In this great manufactory of morality, where every loom goes on as regularly as its neighbor, with a monotonous noise, we distinguish two which sound louder and better than the rest—Barrow and South. Not that they were free from dulness. Barrow had all the air of a college pedant, and dressed so badly that one day in London, before an audience who did not know him, he saw almost the whole congregation at once leave the church. He explained the word εὐχαριστεῖν in the pulpit with all the charm of a dictionary, commenting, translating, dividing, subdividing like the most formidable of scholiasts,[5] caring no more for the public than for himself: so that once, when he had spoken for three hours and a half before the Lord Mayor, he replied to those who asked him if he was not tired, "I did, in fact, begin to be weary of standing so long." But the heart and mind were so full and so rich, that his faults became a power. He had a geometrical method and clearness,[6] an inexhaustible fertility, extraordinary impetuosity and tenacity of logic, writing the same

[4] Tillotson's Sermons, iv. 15-16; Sermon 55, "Of Sincerity towards God and Man," John i. 47. This was the last sermon Tillotson preached; July 29, 1694.—Tr.

[5] Barrow's Theological Works, 6 vols. Oxford, 1818, i. 141-142; Sermon viii. "The Duty of Thanksgiving," Eph. v. 20.

"These words, although (as the very syntax doth immediately discover) they bear a relation to, and have a fit coherence with, those that precede, may yet (especially considering St. Paul's style and manner of expression in the preceptive and exhortative parts of his Epistles), without any violence or prejudice on either hand, be severed from the context, and considered distinctly by themselves. . . . First, then, concerning the duty itself, to give thanks, or rather to be thankful (for εὐχαριστεῖν doth not only signify gratias agere, reddere, dicere, to give, render, or declare thanks, but also gratias habere, grate affectum esse, to be thankfully disposed, to entertain a grateful affection, sense, or memory). . . . I say, concerning this duty itself (abstractedly considered), as it involves a respect to benefits or good things received; so in its employment about them it imports, requires, or supposes these following particulars."

[6] He was a mathematician of the highest order, and had resigned his chair to Newton.

sermon three or four times over, insatiable in his craving to explain and prove, obstinately confined to his already overflowing thoughts, with a minuteness of division, an exactness of connection, a superfluity of explanation, so astonishing that the attention of the hearer at last gives way; and yet the mind turns with the vast engine, carried away and doubled up as by the rolling weight of a flattening-machine.

Let us listen to his sermon, "Of the Love of God." Never was a more copious and forcible analysis seen in England, so penetrating and unwearying a decomposition of an idea into all its parts, a more powerful logic, more rigorously collecting into one network all the threads of a subject:

"Although no such benefit or advantage can accrue to God, which may increase his essential and indefectible happiness; no harm or damage can arrive that may impair it (for he can be neither really more or less rich, or glorious, or joyful than he is; neither have our desire or our fear, our delight or our grief, our designs or our endeavours any object, any ground in those respects); yet hath he declared, that there be certain interests and concernments, which, out of his abundant goodness and condescension, he doth tender and prosecute as his own; as if he did really receive advantage by the good, and prejudice by the bad success, respectively belonging to them; that he earnestly desires and is greatly delighted with some things, very much dislikes and is grievously displeased with other things: for instance, that he bears a fatherly affection towards his creatures, and earnestly desires their welfare; and delights to see them enjoy the good he designed them; as also dislikes the contrary events; doth commiserate and condole their misery; that he is consequently well pleased when piety and justice, peace and order (the chief means conducing to our welfare) do flourish; and displeased, when impiety and iniquity, dissension and disorder (those certain sources of mischief to us) do prevail; that he is well satisfied with our rendering to him that obedience, honour, and respect, which are due to him; and highly offended with our injurious and disrespectful behaviour toward him, in the commission of sin and violation of his most just and holy commandments; so that there wants not sufficient matter of our exercising good-will both in affection and action toward God; we are capable both of wishing and (in a manner, as he will interpret and accept it) of doing good to him, by our concurrence with him in promoting those things which he approves and delights in, and in removing the contrary." [7]

This entanglement wearies us, but what a force and dash is there in this well-considered and complete thought! Truth thus

[7] Barrow's Theological Works, I. Sermon xxiii. 500-501.

supported on all its foundations can never be shaken. Rhetoric is absent. There is no art here; the whole oratorical art consists in the desire thoroughly to explain and prove what he has to say. He is even unstudied and artless; and it is just this ingenuousness which raises him to the antique level. We may meet with an image in his writings which seems to belong to the finest period of Latin simplicity and dignity:

"The middle, we may observe, and the safest, and the fairest, and the most conspicuous places in cities are usually deputed for the erections of statues and monuments dedicated to the memory of worthy men, who have nobly deserved of their countries. In like manner should we in the heart and centre of our soul, in the best and highest apartments thereof, in the places most exposed to ordinary observation, and most secure from the invasions of worldly care, erect lively representations of, and lasting memorials unto, the divine bounty." [8]

There is here a sort of effusion of gratitude; and at the end of the sermon, when we think him exhausted, the expansion becomes more copious by the enumeration of the unlimited blessings amidst which we move like fishes in the sea, not perceiving them, because we are surrounded and submerged by them. During ten pages the idea overflows in a continuous and similar phrase, without fear of crowding or monotony, in spite of all rules, so loaded are the heart and imagination, and so satisfied are they to bring and collect all nature as a single offering:

"To him, the excellent quality, the noble end, the most obliging manner of whose beneficence doth surpass the matter thereof, and hugely augment the benefits: who, not compelled by any necessity, not obliged by any law (or previous compact), not induced by any extrinsic arguments, not inclined by our merits, not wearied with our importunities, not instigated by troublesome passions of pity, shame, or fear (as we are wont to be), not flattered with promises of recompense, nor bribed with expectation of emolument, thence to accrue unto himself; but being absolute master of his own actions, only both lawgiver and counsellor to himself, all-sufficient, and incapable of admitting any accession to his perfect blissfulness; most willingly and freely, out of pure bounty and good-will, is our Friend and Benefactor; preventing not only our desires, but our knowledge; surpassing not our deserts only, but our wishes, yea, even our conceits, in the dispensation of his inestimable and unrequitable benefits; having no other drift in the collation of them, beside our real good and welfare, our profit and advantage, our pleasure and content." [9]

[8] Barrow's Theological Works, i. 145; Sermon viii. "The Duty of Thanksgiving," Eph. v. 20.

[9] Ibid. i. 159-160, Sermon viii.

Zealous energy and lack of taste; such are the features common to all this eloquence. Let us leave this mathematician, this man of the closet, this antique man, who proves too much and is too eager, and let us look out amongst the men of the world him who was called the wittiest of ecclesiastics, Robert South, as different from Barrow in his character and life as in his works and his mind; armed for war, an impassioned royalist, a partisan of divine right and passive obedience, an acrimonious controversialist, a defamer of the dissenters, a foe to the Act of Toleration, who never avoided in his enmities the license of an insult or a foul word. By his side Father Bridaine,[10] who seems so coarse to the French, was polished. His sermons are like a conversation of that time; and we know in what style they conversed then in England. South is not afraid to use any popular and impassioned image. He sets forth little vulgar facts, with their low and striking details. He never shrinks, he never minces matters; he speaks the language of the people. His style is anecdotic, striking, abrupt, with change of tone, forcible and clownish gestures, with every species of originality, vehemence, and boldness. He sneers in the pulpit, he rails, he plays the mimic and comedian. He paints his characters as if he had them before his eyes. The audience will recognize the originals again in the streets; they could put the names to his portraits. Read this bit on hypocrites:

"Suppose a man infinitely ambitious, and equally spiteful and malicious; one who poisons the ears of great men by venomous whispers, and rises by the fall of better men than himself; yet if he steps forth with a Friday look and a Lenten face, with a blessed Jesu! and a mournful ditty for the vices of the times; oh! then he is a saint upon earth: an Ambrose or an Augustine (I mean not for that earthly trash of book-learning; for, alas! such are above that, or at least that's above them), but for zeal and for fasting, for a devout elevation of the eyes, and a holy rage against other men's sins. And happy those ladies and religious dames, characterized in the 2d of Timothy, ch. iii. 6, who can have such self-denying, thriving, able men for their confessors! and thrice happy those families where they vouchsafe to take their Friday night's refreshments! and thereby demonstrate to the world what Christian abstinence, and what primitive, self-mortifying rigor there is in forbearing a dinner, that they may have the better stomach to their supper. In fine, the whole world stands in admiration of them; fools

[10] Jacques Bridaine (1701-1767), a celebrated and zealous French preacher, whose sermons were always extempore, and hence not very cultivated and refined in style.—Tr.

are fond of them, and wise men are afraid of them; they are talked of, they are pointed at; and, as they order the matter, they draw the eyes of all men after them, and generally something else." [11]

A man so frank of speech was sure to commend frankness; he has done so with the bitter irony, the brutality of a Wycherley. The pulpit had the plaindealing and coarseness of the stage; and in this picture of forcible, honest men, whom the world considers as bad characters, we find the pungent familiarity of the "Plain Dealer":

"Again, there are some, who have a certain ill-natured stiffness (forsooth) in their tongue, so as not to be able to applaud and keep pace with this or that self-admiring, vain-glorious Thraso, while he is pluming and praising himself, and telling fulsome stories in his own commendation for three or four hours by the clock, and at the same time reviling and throwing dirt upon all mankind besides.

"There is also a sort of odd ill-natured men, whom neither hopes nor fears, frowns nor favours, can prevail upon, to have any of the cast, beggarly, forlorn nieces or kinswomen of any lord or grandee, spiritual or temporal, trumped upon them.

"To which we may add another sort of obstinate ill-natured persons, who are not to be brought by any one's guilt or greatness, to speak or write, or to swear or lie, as they are bidden, or to give up their own consciences in a compliment to those who have none themselves.

"And lastly, there are some, so extremely ill-natured, as to think it very lawful and allowable for them to be sensible when they are injured or oppressed, when they are slandered in their good names, and wronged in their just interests; and withal, to dare to own what they find, and feel without being such beasts of burden as to bear tamely whatsoever is cast upon them; or such spaniels as to lick the foot which kicks them, or to thank the goodly great one for doing them all these back favours." [12]

In this eccentric style all blows tell; we might call it a boxing-match in which sneers inflict bruises. But see the effect of these churls' vulgarities. We issue thence with a soul full of energetic feeling; we have seen the very objects, as they are, without disguise; we find ourselves battered, but seized by a vigorous hand. This pulpit is effective; and indeed, as compared with the French pulpit, this is its characteristic. These sermons have not the art and artifice, the propriety and moderation of French sermons; they are not like the latter, monuments of style, composition,

[11] South's Sermons, 1715, 11 vols., vi. 110. The fourth and last discourse from those words in Isaiah v. 20, "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."—Tr.

[12] South's Sermons, vi. 118.

harmony, veiled science, tempered imagination, disguised logic, sustained good taste, exquisite proportion, equal to the harangues of the Roman forum and the Athenian agora. They are not classical. No, they are practical. A big workman-like shovel, roughly handled, and encrusted with pedantic rust, was necessary to dig in this coarse civilization. The delicate French gardening would have done nothing with it. If Barrow is redundant, Tillotson heavy, South vulgar, the rest unreadable, they are all convincing; their sermons are not models of elegance, but instruments of edification. Their glory is not in their books, but in their works. They have framed morals, not literary productions.

Section VI.—Theology

To form morals is not all; there are creeds to be defended. We must combat doubt as well as vice, and theology goes side by side with preaching. It abounds at this moment in England. Anglicans, Presbyterians, Independents, Quakers, Baptists, Antitrinitarians, wrangle with each other, "as heartily as a Jansenist damns a Jesuit," and are never tired of forging weapons. What is there to take hold of and preserve in all this arsenal? In France at least theology is lofty; the fairest flowers of mind and genius have there grown over the briers of scholastics; if the subject repels, the dress attracts. Pascal and Bossuet, Fénelon and La Bruyère, Voltaire, Diderot and Montesquieu, friends and enemies, all have scattered their wealth of pearls and gold. Over the threadbare woof of barren doctrines the seventeenth century has embroidered a majestic stole of purple and silk; and the eighteenth century, crumpling and tearing it, scatters it in a thousand golden threads, which sparkle like a ball-dress. But in England all is dull, dry, and gloomy; the great men themselves, Addison and Locke, when they meddle in the defense of Christianity, become flat and wearisome. From Chillingworth to Paley, apologies, refutations, expositions, discussions, multiply and make us yawn; they reason well, and that is all. The theologian enters on a campaign against the Papists of the seventeenth century and the Deists of the eighteenth,[1] like a

[1] I thought it necessary to look into the Socinian pamphlets, which have swarmed so much among us within a few years.—Stillingfleet, "In Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 1697.

tactician, by rule, taking a position on a principle, throwing up all around a breastwork of arguments, covering everything with texts, marching calmly underground in the long shafts which he has dug; we approach and see a sallow-faced pioneer creep out, with frowning brow, stiff hands, dirty clothes; he thinks he is protected from all attacks; his eyes, glued to the ground, have not seen the broad level road beside his bastion, by which the enemy will outflank and surprise him. A sort of incurable mediocrity keeps men like him, mattock in hand, in their trenches, where no one is likely to pass. They understand neither their texts nor their formulas. They are impotent in criticism and philosophy. They treat the poetic figures of Scripture, the bold style, the approximations to improvisation, the mystical Hebrew emotion, the subtilties and abstractions of Alexandrian metaphysics, with the precision of a jurist and a psychologist. They wish actually to make of Scripture an exact code of prescriptions and definitions, drawn up by a convention of legislators. Open the first that comes to hand, one of the oldest—John Hales. He comments on a passage of St. Matthew, where a question arises on a matter forbidden on the Sabbath. What was this? "The disciples plucked the ears of corn and did eat them." [2] Then follow divisions and arguments raining down by myriads.[3] Take the most celebrated: Sherlock, applying the new psychology, invents an explanation of the Trinity, and imagines three divine souls, each knowing what passes in the others. Stillingfleet refutes Locke, who thought that the soul in the resurrection, though having a body, would not perhaps have exactly the same one in which it had lived. Let us look at the most illustrious of all, the learned Clarke, a mathematician, philosopher, scholar, theologian; he is busy patching up Arianism. The great Newton himself comments on the Apocalypse, and proves that the Pope is Antichrist. In vain have these men genius; as soon as they touch religion, they become antiquated, narrow-minded; they make no way;

[2] John Hales of Eaton, Works, 3 vols., 12mo, 1765, i. 4.

[3] He examines, amongst other things, "the sin against the Holy Ghost." They would very much like to know in what this consists. But nothing is more obscure. Calvin and other theologians each gave a different definition. After a minute dissertation, Hales concludes thus: "And though negative proofs from Scripture are not demonstrative, yet the general silence of the apostles may at least help to infer a probability that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not committable by any Christian who lived not in the time of our Saviour" (1636). This is a training for argument. So, in Italy, the discussion about giving drawers to, or withholding them from the Capuchins, developed political and diplomatic ability.—Ibid. i. 36.

they are stubborn, and obstinately knock their heads against the same obstacle. They bury themselves, generation after generation, in the hereditary hole with English patience and conscientiousness, whilst the enemy marches by, a league off. Yet in the hole they argue; they square it, round it, face it with stones, then with bricks, and wonder that, notwithstanding all these expedients, the enemy marches on. I have read a host of these treatises, and I have not gleaned a single idea. We are annoyed to see so much lost labor, and amazed that, during so many generations, people so virtuous, zealous, thoughtful, loyal, well read, well trained in discussion, have only succeeded in filling the lower shelves of libraries. We muse sadly on this second scholastic theology, and end by perceiving that if it was without effect in the kingdom of science, it was because it only strove to bear fruit in the kingdom of action.

All these speculative minds were so in appearance only. They were apologists, and not inquirers. They busy themselves with morality, not with truth.[4] They would shrink from treating God as a hypothesis, and the Bible as a document. They would see a vicious tendency in the broad impartiality of criticism and philosophy. They would have scruples of conscience if they indulged in free inquiry without limitation. In reality there is a sort of sin in truly free inquiry, because it presupposes scepticism, abandons reverence, weighs good and evil in the same balance, and equally receives all doctrines, scandalous or edifying, as soon as they are proved. They banish these dissolving speculations; they look on them as occupants of the slothful; they seek from argument only motives and means for right conduct. They do not love it for itself; they repress it as soon as it strives to become independent; they demand that reason shall be Christian and Protestant; they would give it the lie under any other form; they reduce it to the humble position of a handmaid, and set over it their own inner Biblical and utilitarian sense. In vain did free-thinkers arise in the beginning of the century; forty years later they were drowned in forgetful-

[4] "The Scripture is a book of morality, and not of philosophy. Everything there relates to practice. . . . It is evident, from a cursory view of the Old and New Testament, that they are miscellaneous books, some parts of which are history, others writ in a poetical style, and others prophetical; but the design of them all, is professedly to recommend the practice of true religion and virtue."—John Clarke, Chaplain of the King, 1721. [I have not been able to find these exact words in the edition of Clarke accessible to me.—Tr.]

ness.[5] Deism and atheism were in England only a transient eruption developed on the surface of the social body, in the bad air of the great world and the plethora of native energy. Professed irreligious men, Toland, Tindal, Mandeville, Bolingbroke, met foes stronger than themselves. The leaders of experimental philosophy,[6] the most learned and accredited of the scholars of the age,[7] the most witty authors, the most beloved and able,[8] all the authority of science and genius was employed in putting them down. Refutations abound. Every year, on the foundation of Robert Boyle, men noted for their talent or knowledge come to London to preach eight sermons, for proving the Christian religion against notorious infidels, viz., atheists, deists, pagans, Mohammedans and Jews. And these apologies are solid, able to convince a liberal mind, infallible for the conviction of a moral mind. The clergymen who write them, Clarke, Bentley, Law, Watt, Warburton, Butler, are not below the lay science and intellect. Moreover, the lay element assists them. Addison writes the "Evidences of Christianity," Locke the "Reasonableness of Christianity," Ray the "Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of the Creation." Over and above this concert of serious words is heard a ringing voice: Swift compliments with his terrible irony the elegant rogues who entertained the wise idea of abolishing Christianity. If they had been ten times more numerous they would not have succeeded, for they had nothing to substitute in its place. Lofty speculation, which alone could take the ground, was shown or declared to be impotent. On all sides philosophical conceptions dwindle or come to naught. If Berkeley lighted on one, the denial of matter, it stands alone, without influence on the public, as it were a theological *coup d'état*, like a pious man who wants to undermine immorality and materialism at their basis. Newton attained at most an incomplete idea of space, and was only a mathematician. Locke, almost as poor,[9] gropes about, hesitates, does little more than guess, doubt, start an opinion to advance and withdraw it by turns, not seeing its far-off consequences, nor, above all, exhausting anything. In short, he forbids himself lofty questions, and is very much inclined to forbid them to us. He has written

[5] Burke, "Reflections on the Revolution in France."
[6] Ray, Boyle, Barrow, Newton.
[7] Bentley, Clarke, Warburton, Berkeley.
[8] Locke, Addison, Swift, Johnson, Richardson.
[9] "Paupertina philosophia," says Leibnitz.

a book to inquire what objects are within our reach, or above our comprehension. He seeks for our limitations; he soon finds them, and troubles himself no further. Let us shut ourselves in our own little domain, and work there diligently. Our business in this world is not to know all things, but those which regard the conduct of our life. If Hume, more bold, goes further, it is in the same track: he preserves nothing of lofty science; he abolishes speculation altogether. According to him, we know neither substances, causes, nor laws. When we affirm that an object is conjoined to another object, it is because we choose, by custom; "all events seem entirely loose and separate." If we give them "a tie," it is our imagination which creates it;[10] there is nothing true but doubt, and even we must doubt this. The conclusion is, that we shall do well to purge our mind of all theory, and only believe in order that we may act. Let us examine our wings only in order to cut them off, and let us confine ourselves to walking with our legs. So finished a pyrrhonism serves only to cast the world back upon established beliefs. In fact, Reid, being honest, is alarmed. He sees society broken up, God vanishing in smoke, the family evaporating in hypotheses. He objects as a father of a family, a good citizen, a religious man, and sets up common sense as a sovereign judge of truth. Rarely, I think, in this world has speculation fallen lower. Reid does not even understand the systems which he discusses; he lifts his hands to heaven when he tries to expound Aristotle and Leibnitz. If some municipal body were to order a system, it would be this churchwarden-philosophy. In reality the men of this country did not care for metaphysics; to interest them it must be reduced to psychology. Then it becomes a science of observation, positive and useful, like botany; still the best fruit which they pluck from it is a theory of moral sentiments. In this domain Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Price, Smith, Ferguson, and Hume himself prefer to labor; here they find their most original and durable ideas. On this point the public instinct is so strong that it enrolls the

[10] After the constant conjunction of two objects—heat and flame, for instance, weight and solidity—we are determined by custom alone to expect the one from the appearance of the other. All inferences from experience are effects of custom, not of reasoning. . . . "Upon the whole, there appears not, throughout all nature, any one instance of connection which is conceivable by us. All events seem entirely loose and separate; one event follows another; but we can never observe any tie between them. They seem conjoined, but never connected."—Hume's Essays, 4 vols., 1760, iii. 117.

most independent minds in its service, and only permit them the discoveries which benefit it. Except two or three, chiefly purely literary men, and who are French or Frenchified in mind, they busy themselves only with morals. This idea rallies round Christianity all the forces which in France Voltaire ranges against it. They all defend it on the same ground—as a tie for civil society, and as a support for private virtue. Formerly instinct supported it; now opinion consecrates it; and it is the same secret force which, by a gradual labor, at present adds the weight of opinion to the pressure of instinct. Moral sense, having preserved for it the fidelity of the lower classes, conquered for it the approval of the loftier intellects. Moral sense transfers it from the public conscience to the literary world, and from being popular makes it official.

Section VII.—The Constitution.—Locke's Theory of Government

We would hardly suspect this public tendency, after taking a distant view of the English constitution: but on a closer view it is the first thing we see. It appears to be an aggregate of privileges, that is, of sanctioned injustices. The truth is, that it is a body of contracts, that is, of recognized rights. Every one, great or small, has its own, which he defends with all his might. My lands, my property, my chartered right, whatsoever it be, antiquated, indirect, superfluous, individual, public, none shall touch it, king, lords, or commons. Is it of the value of five shillings? I will defend it as if it were worth a million sterling; it is my person which they would attack. I will leave my business, lose my time, throw away my money, form associations, pay fines, go to prison, perish in the attempt; no matter; I shall show that I am no coward, that I will not bend under injustice, that I will not yield a portion of my right.

By this sentiment Englishmen have conquered and preserved public liberty. This feeling, after they had dethroned Charles I and James II, is shaped into principles in the declaration of 1689, and is developed by Locke in demonstrations.[1] "All

[1] We must read Sir Robert Filmer's "Patriarcha," London, 1680, on the prevailing theory in order to see from what a quagmire of follies people emerged. He said that Adam, on his creation, had received an absolute and regal power over the universe; that in every society of men there was one legitimate king, the direct heir of Adam. "Some say it was by lot, and others that Noah sailed

men," says Locke, " are naturally in a state of perfect freedom, also of equality." [2] " In the State of Nature everyone has the Executive power of the Law of Nature," [3] *i.e.*, of judging, punishing, making war, ruling his family and dependents. " There only is political society where every one of the members hath quitted this natural Power, resign'd it up into the Hands of the Community in all Cases that exclude him not from appealing for Protection to the Law established by it." [4]

" Those who are united into one body and have a common established law and judicature to appeal to, with authority . . . to punish offenders, are in civil society one with another.[5] As for the ruler (they are ready to tell you), he ought to be absolute. . . . Because he has power to do more hurt and wrong, 'tis right when he does it. . . . This is to think, that men are so foolish, that they take care to avoid what mischiefs may be done them by polecats or foxes; but are content, nay, think it safety, to be devoured by lions.[6] The only way whereby any one divests himself of his natural liberty, and puts on the bonds of civil society, is by agreeing with other men to join and unite into a community, for their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties, and a greater security against any, that are not of it." [7]

Umpires, rules of arbitration, this is all which their federation can impose upon them. They are freemen, who, having made a mutual treaty, are still free. Their society does not found, but guarantees their rights. And official acts here sustain abstract theory. When Parliament declares the throne vacant, its first argument is, that the king has violated the original contract by which he was king. When the Commons impeach Sacheverell, it was in order publicly to maintain that the constitution of England was founded on a contract, and that the subjects of this kingdom have, in their different public and private capacities, as legal a title to the possession of the rights accorded to them by law, as the prince has to the possession of the crown. When Lord Chatham defended the election of Wilkes, it was by laying down that " the rights of the greatest and of the meanest subjects now stand upon the same foundation, the security of law

round the Mediterranean in ten years, and divided the world into Asia, Africa, and Europe " (p. 15)—portions for his three sons. Compare Bossuet, " Politique fondée sur l'Ecriture." At this epoch moral science was being emancipated from theology.

[2] Locke, " Of Civil Government," 1714, book ii. ch. ii. sec. 4.
[3] Ibid. sec. 13.
[4] Ibid. ii. ch. vii. sec. 87.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid. sec. 93.
[7] Ibid. ii. ch. viii. sec. 95.

common to all. . . . When the people had lost their rights, those of the peerage would soon become insignificant." It was no supposition or philosophy which founded them, but an act and deed, Magna Charta, the Petition of Rights, the Habeas Corpus Act, and the whole body of the statute laws.

These rights are there, inscribed on parchments, stored up in archives, signed, sealed, authentic; those of the farmer and prince are traced on the same page, in the same ink, by the same writer; both are on an equality on this vellum; the gloved hand clasps the horny palm. What though they are unequal? It is by mutual accord; the peasant is as much a master in his cottage, with his rye-bread and his nine shillings a week,[8] as the Duke of Marlborough in Blenheim Castle, with his many thousands a year in places and pensions.

There they are, these men, standing erect and ready to defend themselves. Pursue this sentiment of right in the details of political life; the force of brutal temperament and concentrated or savage passions provides arms. If we go to an election, the first thing we see is the full tables.[9] They cram themselves at the candidate's expense: ale, gin, brandy are set flowing without concealment: the victuals descend into their electoral stomachs, and their faces grow red. At the same time they become furious. "Every glass they pour down serves to increase their animosity. Many an honest man, before as harmless as a tame rabbit, when loaded with a single election dinner, has become more dangerous than a charged culverin." [10] The wrangle turns into a fight, and the pugnacious instinct, once loosed, craves for blows. The candidates bawl against each other till they are hoarse. They are chaired, to the great peril of their necks; the mob yells, cheers, grows warm with the motion, the defiance, the row; big words of patriotism peal out, anger and drink inflame their blood, fists are clenched, cudgels are at work, and bulldog passions regulate the greatest interests of the country. Let all beware how they draw these passions down on their heads: Lords, Com-

[8] De Foe's estimate.

[9] "Their eating, indeed, amazes me; had I five hundred heads, and were each head furnished with brains, yet would they all be insufficient to compute the number of cows, pigs, geese, and turkies which upon this occasion die for the good of their country! . . . On the contrary, they seem to lose their temper as they lose their appetites; every morsel they swallow serves to increase their animosity . . . The mob meet upon the debate, fight themselves sober, and then draw off to get drunk again, and charge for another encounter."—Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World," Letter cxii. "An election described." See also Hogarth's prints.

[10] Ibid.

mons, King, they will spare no one; and when Government would oppress a man in spite of them, they will compel Government to suppress their own law.

They are not to be muzzled, they make that a matter of pride. With them, pride assists instinct in defending the right. Each feels that "his house is his castle," and that the law keeps guard at his door. Each tells himself that he is defended against private insolence, that the public arbitrary power will never touch him, that he has "his body," and can answer blows by blows, wounds by wounds, that he will be judged by an impartial jury and a law common to all. "Even if an Englishman," says Montesquieu, "has as many enemies as hairs on his head, nothing will happen to him. The laws there were not made for one more than for another; each looks on himself as a king, and the men of this nation are more confederates than fellow-citizens." This goes so far "that there is hardly a day when some one does not lose respect for the king. Lately my Lady Bell Molineux, a regular virago, sent to have the trees pulled up from a small piece of land which the queen had bought for Kensington, and went to law with her, without having wished, under any pretext, to come to terms with her; she made the queen's secretary wait three hours." [11] "When Englishmen come to France, they are deeply astonished to see the sway of 'the king's good pleasure, the Bastile, the *lettres de cachet;* a gentleman who dare not live on his estate in the country, for fear of the governor of the province; a groom of the king's chamber, who, for a cut with a razor, kills a poor barber with impunity." [12] In England, "one man does not fear another." If we converse with any of them, we will find how greatly this security raises their hearts and courage. A sailor who rows Voltaire about, and may be pressed next day into the fleet, prefers his condition to that of the Frenchman, and looks on him with pity, whilst taking his five shillings. The vastness of their pride breaks forth at every step and in every page. An Englishman, says Chesterfield, thinks himself equal to beating three Frenchmen. They would willingly declare that they are in the herd of men as bulls in a herd of cattle. We hear them bragging of their boxing, of their meat and ale, of all that can support the force and energy of their

[11] Montesquieu, "Notes sur l'Angleterre."

[12] Smollett, "Peregrine Pickle," ch. 40.

virile will. Roast-beef and beer make stronger arms than cold water and frogs.[13] In the eyes of the vulgar, the French are starved wigmakers, papists, and serfs, an inferior kind of creatures, who can neither call their bodies nor their souls their own, puppets and tools in the hands of a master and a priest. As for themselves,

> "Stern o'er each bosom reason holds her state
> With daring aims irregularly great.
> Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
> I see the lords of human kind pass by;
> Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
> By forms unfashion'd, fresh from nature's hand,
> Fierce in their native hardiness of soul,
> True to imagin'd right, above control,
> While even the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
> And learns to venerate himself as man." [14]

Men thus constituted can become impassioned in public concerns, for they are their own concerns; in France they are only the business of the king and of Mme. de Pompadour.[15] In England, political parties are as ardent as sects: High Church and Low Church, capitalists and landed proprietors, court nobility and county families, they have their dogmas, their theories, their manners, and their hatreds, like Presbyterians, Anglicans, and Quakers. The country squire rails, over his wine, at the House of Hanover, drinks to the king over the water; the Whig in London, on the thirtieth of January, drinks to the man in the mask,[16] and then to the man who will do the same thing without a mask. They imprisoned, exiled, beheaded each other, and Parliament resounded daily with the fury of their animadversions. Political, like religious life, wells up and overflows, and its outbursts only mark the force of the flame which nourishes it. The passion of parties, in state affairs as in matters of belief, is a proof of zeal; constant quiet is only general indifference; and if people fight at elections, it is because they take an interest in them. Here "a tiler had the newspaper brought to him on the roof that he might read it." A stranger who reads the papers "would think the country on the eve of a revolution." When Government takes a step, the public feels itself involved

[13] See Hogarth's prints.
[14] Goldsmith's "Traveller."
[15] Chesterfield observes that a Frenchman of his time did not understand the word Country; you must speak to him of his Prince.
[16] The executioner of Charles I.

in it; its honor and its property are being disposed of by the minister; let the minister beware if he disposes of them ill. With the French, M. de Conflans, who lost his fleet through cowardice, is punished by an epigram; here, Admiral Byng, who was too prudent to risk his, was shot. Every man in his due position, and according to his power, takes part in public business: the mob broke the heads of those who would not drink Dr. Sacheverell's health; gentlemen came in mounted troops to meet him. Some public favorite or enemy is always exciting open demonstrations. One day it is Pitt whom the people cheer, and on whom the municipal corporations bestow many gold boxes; another day it is Grenville, whom people go to hiss when coming out of the house; then again Lord Bute, whom the queen loves, who is hissed, and who is burned under the effigy of a boat, a pun on his name, whilst the Princess of Wales was burned under the effigy of a petticoat; or the Duke of Bedford, whose town house is attacked by a mob, and who is only saved by a garrison of horse and foot; Wilkes, whose papers the Government seize, and to whom the jury assign one thousand pounds damages. Every morning appear newspapers and pamphlets to discuss affairs, criticise characters, denounce by name lords, orators, ministers, the king himself. He who wants to speak speaks. In this wrangle of writings and associations opinion swells, mounts like a wave, and falling upon Parliament and Court, drowns intrigue and carries away all differences. After all, in spite of the rotten boroughs, it is public opinion which rules. What though the king be obstinate, the men in power band together? Public opinion growls, and everything bends or breaks. The Pitts rose as high as they did only because public opinion raised them, and the independence of the individual ended in the sovereignty of the people.

In such a state, "all passions being free, hatred, envy, jealousy, the fervor for wealth and distinction, would be displayed in all their fulness." [17] We can imagine with what force and energy eloquence must have been implanted and flourished. For the first time since the fall of the ancient tribune, it found a soil in which it could take root and live, and a harvest of orators sprang up, equal, in the diversity of their talents, the energy of their convictions, and the magnificence of their style, to that which

[17] Montesquieu, "De l'Esprit des Lois," book xix. ch. 27.

once covered the Greek *agora* and the Roman *forum*. For a long time it seemed that liberty of speech, experience in affairs, the importance of the interests involved, and the greatness of the rewards offered, should have forced its growth; but eloquence came to nothing, encrusted in theological pedantry, or limited in local aims; and the privacy of the parliamentary sittings deprived it of half its force by removing from it the light of day. Now at last there was light; publicity, at first incomplete, then entire, gives Parliament the nation for an audience. Speech becomes elevated and enlarged at the same time that the public is polished and more numerous. Classical art, become perfect, furnishes method and development. Modern culture introduces into technical reasoning freedom of discourse and a breadth of general ideas. In place of arguing, men conversed; they were attorneys, they became orators. With Addison, Steele, and Swift, taste and genius invade politics. Voltaire cannot say whether the meditated harangues once delivered in Athens and Rome excelled the unpremeditated speeches of Windham, Carteret, and their rivals. In short, discourse succeeds in overcoming the dryness of special questions and the coldness of compassed action, which had so long restricted it; it boldly and irregularly extends its force and luxuriance; and in contrast with the fine abbés of the drawing-room, who in France compose their academical compliments, we see appear the manly eloquence of Junius, Chatham, Fox, Pitt, Burke, and Sheridan.

I need not relate their lives nor unfold their characters; I should have to enter upon political details. Three of them, Lord Chatham, Fox, and Pitt, were ministers,[18] and their eloquence is part of their power and their acts. That eloquence is the concern of those men who may record their political history; I can simply take note of its tone and accent.

Section VIII.—Parliamentary Orators

An extraordinary afflatus, a sort of quivering of intense determination, runs through all these speeches. Men speak, and they speak as if they fought. No caution, politeness, restraint. They are unfettered, they abandon themselves, they hurl them-

[18] Junius wrote anonymously, and critics have not yet been able with certainty to reveal his true name. Most probably he was Sir Philip Francis.

selves onward; and if they restrain themselves, it is only that they may strike more pitilessly and more forcibly. When the elder Pitt first filled the House with his vibrating voice, he already possessed his indomitable audacity. In vain Walpole tried to "muzzle him," then to crush him; his sarcasm was sent back to him with a prodigality of outrages, and the all-powerful minister bent, smitten with the truth of the biting insult which the young man inflicted on him. A lofty haughtiness, only surpassed by that of his son, an arrogance which reduced his colleagues to the rank of subalterns, a Roman patriotism which demanded for England a universal tyranny, an ambition lavish of money and men, gave the nation its rapacity and its fire, and only saw rest in far vistas of dazzling glory and limitless power, an imagination which brought into Parliament the vehemence and declamation of the stage, the brilliancy of fitful inspiration, the boldness of poetic imagery. Such are the sources of his eloquence:

"'*But yesterday, and* England *might have stood against the world; now none so poor to do her reverence.*'

"My lords, *you cannot conquer America.*

"We shall be forced ultimately to retract; let us retract while we can, not when we must. I say we must necessarily undo these violent oppressive Acts: they must be repealed—you will repeal them; I pledge myself for it, that you will in the end repeal them; I stake my reputation on it. I will consent to be taken for an idiot, if they are not finally repealed.

"You may swell every expense, and every effort, still more extravagantly; pile and accumulate every assistance you can buy or borrow; traffic and barter with every little pitiful German prince, that sells and sends his subjects to the shambles of a foreign prince; your efforts are for ever vain and impotent—doubly so from this mercenary aid on which you rely; for it irritates, to an incurable resentment, the minds of your enemies. To overrun them with the mercenary sons of rapine and plunder; devoting them and their possessions to the rapacity of hireling cruelty! If I were an American as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms —never—never—never!

"But, my Lords, who is the man, that in addition to these disgraces and mischiefs of our army, has dared to authorize and associate to our arms the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the savage? To call into civilised alliance the wild and inhuman savage of the woods; to delegate to the merciless Indian the defence of disputed rights, and to wage the horrors of barbarous war against our brethren? My Lords, these enormities cry aloud for redress and punishment; unless thoroughly

done away, it will be a stain on the national character—it is a violation of the constitution—I believe it is against law." [1]

There is a touch of Milton and Shakespeare in this tragic pomp, in this impassioned solemnity, in the sombre and violent brilliancy of this overstrung and overloaded style. In such superb and blood-like purple are English passions clad, under the folds of such a banner they fall into battle array; the more powerfully that amongst them there is one altogether holy, the sentiment of right, which rallies, occupies, and ennobles them:

"I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of people so dead to all the feelings of liberty, as voluntarily to submit to be slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of the rest." [2]

"Let the sacredness of this property remain inviolate; let it be taxable only by their own consent given in their provincial assemblies; else it will cease to be property.

"This glorious spirit of Whiggism animates three millions in America, who prefer poverty with liberty to gilded chains and sordid affluence, and who will die in defence of their rights as men, as freemen. . . . The spirit which now resists your taxation in America is the same which formerly opposed loans, benevolences, and ship money in England; the same spirit which called all England on its legs, and by the Bill of Rights vindicated the English constitution; the same spirit which established the great fundamental, essential maxim of your liberties; that no subject of England shall be taxed but by his own consent.

"As an Englishman by birth and principle, I recognise to the Americans their supreme unalienable right in their property, a right which they are justified in the defence of to the last extremity." [3]

If Pitt sees his own right, he sees that of others too; it was with this idea that he moved and managed England. For it, he appealed to Englishmen against themselves; and in spite of themselves they recognized their dearest instinct in this maxim, that every human will is inviolable in its limited and legal province, and that it must put forth its whole strength against the slightest usurpation.

Unrestrained passions and the most manly sentiment of right; such is the abstract of all this eloquence. Instead of an orator, a public man, let us take a writer, a private individual; let us look at the letters of Junius, which, amidst national irritation and anxiety, fell one by one like drops of fire on the fevered

[1] "Anecdotes and Speeches of the Earl of Chatham," 7th ed. 3 vols. 1810, ii. ch. 42 and 44.

[2] Ibid. ii. ch. 29.

[3] Ibid. 42.

limbs of the body politic. If he makes his phrases concise, and selects his epithets, it was not from a love of style, but in order the better to stamp his insult. Oratorical artifices in his hand become instruments of torture, and when he files his periods it was to drive the knife deeper and surer; with what audacity of denunciation, with what sternness of animosity, with what corrosive and burning irony, applied to the most secret corners of private life, with what inexorable persistence of calculated and meditated persecution, the quotations alone will show. He writes to the Duke of Bedford:

"My lord, you are so little accustomed to receive any marks of respect or esteem from the public, that if, in the following lines, a compliment or expression of applause should escape me, I fear you would consider it as a mockery of your established character, and perhaps an insult to your understanding." [4]

He writes to the Duke of Grafton:

"There is something in both your character and conduct which distinguishes you not only from all other ministers, but from all other men. It is not that you do wrong by design, but that you should never do right by mistake. It is not that your indolence and your activity have been equally misapplied, but that the first uniform principle, or, if I may call it, the genius of your life, should have carried you through every possible change and contradiction of conduct, without the momentary imputation or colour of a virtue; and that the wildest spirit of inconsistency should never once have betrayed you into a wise or honourable action." [5]

Junius goes on, fiercer and fiercer; even when he sees the minister fallen and dishonored, he is still savage.

It is vain that he confesses aloud that in the state in which he is, the Duke might "disarm a private enemy of his resentment." He grows worse:

"You have every claim to compassion that can arise from misery and distress. The condition you are reduced to would disarm a private enemy of his resentment, and leave no consolation to the most vindictive spirit, but that such an object, as you are, would disgrace the dignity of revenge. . . . For my own part, I do not pretend to understand those prudent forms of decorum, those gentle rules of discretion, which some men endeavour to unite with the conduct of the greatest and most hazardous affairs. . . . I should scorn to provide for a future retreat, or to keep terms with a man who preserves no measures with the

[4] Junius's Letters, 2 vols. 1772, xxiii. i. 162. [5] Ibid. xii. i. 75.

public. Neither the abject submission of deserting his post in the hour of danger, nor even the sacred shield of cowardice, should protect him. I would pursue him through life, and try the last exertion of my abilities to preserve the perishable infamy of his name, and make it immortal." [6]

Except Swift, is there a human being who has more intentionally concentrated and intensified in his heart the venom of hatred? Yet this is not vile, for it thinks itself to be in the service of justice. Amidst these excesses, this is the persuasion which enhances them; these men tear one another; but they do not crouch; whoever their enemy be, they take their stand in front of him. Thus Junius addresses the king:

"Sir: It is the misfortune of your life, and originally the cause of every reproach and distress which has attended your government, that you should never have been acquainted with the language of truth until you heard it in the complaints of your people. It is not, however, too late to correct the error of your education. We are still inclined to make an indulgent allowance for the pernicious lessons you received in your youth, and to form the most sanguine hopes from the natural benevolence of your disposition. We are far from thinking you capable of a direct, deliberate purpose to invade those original rights of your subjects on which all their civil and political liberties depend. Had it been possible for us to entertain a suspicion so dishonourable to your character, we should long since have adopted a style of remonstrance very distant from the humility of complaint. . . . The people of England are loyal to the House of Hanover, not from a vain preference of one family to another, but from a conviction that the establishment of that family was necessary to the support of their civil and religious liberties. This, Sir, is a principle of allegiance equally solid and rational; fit for Englishmen to adopt, and well worthy of your Majesty's encouragement. We cannot long be deluded by nominal distinctions. The name of Stuart, of itself, is only contemptible:—armed with the sovereign authority, their principles are formidable. The prince who imitates their conduct, should be warned by their example; and while he plumes himself upon the security of his title to the crown, should remember that, as it was acquired by one revolution, it may be lost by another." [7]

Let us look for less bitter souls, and try to encounter a sweeter accent. There is one man, Charles James Fox, happy from his cradle, who learned everything without study, whom his father trained in prodigality and recklessness, whom, from the age of twenty-one, the public voice proclaimed as the first in eloquence

[6] Junius's Letters, xxxvi. ii. 56.

[7] Ibid. xxxv. ii. 29.

and the leader of a great party, liberal, humane, sociable, not frustrating these generous expectations, whose very enemies pardoned his faults, whom his friends adored, whom labor never wearied, whom rivals never embittered, whom power did not spoil; a lover of converse, of literature, of pleasure, who has left the impress of his rich genius in the persuasive abundance, in the fine character, the clearness and continuous ease of his speeches. Behold him rising to speak; think of the discretion he must use; he is a statesman, a premier, speaking in Parliament of the friends of the king, lords of the bedchamber, the noblest families of the kingdom, with their allies and connections around him; he knows that every one of his words will pierce like a fiery arrow into the heart and honor of five hundred men who sit to hear him. No matter, he has been betrayed; he will punish the traitors, and here is the pillory in which he sets "the janizaries of the bedchamber," who by the Prince's order have deserted him in the thick of the fight:

"The whole compass of language affords no terms sufficiently strong and pointed to mark the contempt which I feel for their conduct. It is an impudent avowal of political profligacy, as if that species of treachery were less infamous than any other. It is not only a degradation of a station which ought to be occupied only by the highest and most exemplary honour, but forfeits their claim to the characters of gentlemen, and reduces them to a level with the meanest and the basest of the species; it insults the noble, the ancient, and the characteristic independence of the English peerage, and is calculated to traduce and vilify the British legislature in the eyes of all Europe, and to the latest posterity. By what magic nobility can thus charm vice into virtue, I know not nor wish to know; but in any other thing than politics, and among any other men than lords of the bedchamber, such an instance of the grossest perfidy would, as it well deserves, be branded with infamy and execration." [8]

Then turning to the Commons:

"A Parliament thus fettered and controlled, without spirit and without freedom, instead of limiting, extends, substantiates, and establishes beyond all precedent, latitude, or condition, the prerogatives of the crown. But though the British House of Commons were so shamefully lost to its own weight in the constitution, were so unmindful of its former struggles and triumphs in the great cause of liberty and mankind, were so indifferent and treacherous to those primary objects and concerns for which it was originally instituted, I trust the characteristic

[8] Fox's Speeches, 6 vols. 1815, ii. 271; December 17, 1783.

spirit of this country is still equal to the trial; I trust Englishmen will be as jealous of secret influence as superior to open violence; I trust they are not more ready to defend their interests against foreign depredation and insult, than to encounter and defeat this midnight conspiracy against the constitution." [9]

If such are the outbursts of a nature above all gentle and amiable, we can judge what the others must have been. A sort of impassioned exaggeration reigns in the debates to which the trial of Warren Hastings and the French Revolution gave rise, in the acrimonious rhetoric and forced declamation of Sheridan, in the pitiless sarcasm and sententious pomp of the younger Pitt. These orators love the coarse vulgarity of gaudy colors; they hunt out accumulations of big words, contrasts symmetrically protracted, vast and resounding periods. They do not fear to repel; they crave effect. Force is their characteristic, and the characteristic of the greatest amongst them, the first mind of the age, Edmund Burke, of whom Dr. Johnson said: "Take up whatever topic you please, he (Burke) is ready to meet you."

Burke did not enter Parliament, like Pitt and Fox, in the dawn of his youth, but at thirty-five, having had time to train himself thoroughly in all matters, learned in law, history, philosophy, literature, master of such a universal erudition that he has been compared to Bacon. But what distinguished him from all other men was a wide, comprehensive intellect, which, exercised by philosophical studies and writings,[10] seized the general aspects of things, and, beyond text, constitutions, and figures, perceived the invisible tendency of events and the inner spirit, covering with his contempt those pretended statesmen, a vulgar herd of common journeymen, denying the existence of everything not coarse or material, and who, far from being capable of guiding the grand movements of an empire, are not worthy to turn the wheel of a machine.

Beyond all those gifts, he possessed one of those fertile and precise imaginations which believe that finished knowledge is an inner view, which never quit a subject without having clothed it in its colors and forms, and which, passing beyond statistics and the rubbish of dry documents, recompose and reconstruct before the reader's eyes a distant country and a foreign nation, with its

[9] Fox's Speeches, ii. p. 268.
[10] "An Inquiry into our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful."

monuments, dresses, landscapes, and all the shifting detail of its aspects and manners. To all these powers of mind, which constitute a man of system, he added all those energies of heart which constitute an enthusiast. Poor, unknown, having spent his youth in compiling for the publishers, he rose, by dint of work and personal merit, with a pure reputation and an unscathed conscience, ere the trials of his obscure life or the seductions of his brilliant life had fettered his independence or tarnished the flower of his loyalty. He brought to politics a horror of crime, a vivacity and sincerity of conscience, a humanity, a sensibility, which seem only suitable to a young man. He based human society on maxims of morality, insisted upon a high and pure tone of feeling in the conduct of public business, and seemed to have undertaken to raise and authorize the generosity of the human heart. He fought nobly for noble causes; against the crimes of power in England, the crimes of the people in France, the crimes of monopolists in India. He defended, with immense research and unimpeached disinterestedness, the Hindoos tyrannized over by English greed:

"Every man of rank and landed fortune being long since extinguished, the remaining miserable last cultivator who grows to the soil after having his back scored by the farmer, has it again flayed by the whip of the assignee, and is thus by a ravenous because a short-lived succession of claimants lashed from oppressor to oppressor, whilst a single drop of blood is left as the means of extorting a single grain of corn." [11]

He made himself everywhere the champion of principle and the persecutor of vice; and men saw him bring to the attack all the forces of his wonderful knowledge, his lofty reason, his splendid style, with the unwearying and untempered ardor of a moralist and a knight.

Let us read him only several pages at a time: only thus he is great; otherwise all that is exaggerated, commonplace, and strange, will arrest and shock us; but if we give ourselves up to him, we will be carried away and captivated. The enormous mass of his documents rolls impetuously in a current of eloquence. Sometimes a spoken or written discourse needs a whole volume to unfold the train of his multiplied proofs and courageous anger. It is either the *exposé* of an administration,

[11] Burke's Works, 1808, 8 vols. iv. 286, "Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts."

or the whole history of British India, or the complete theory of revolutions, and the political conditions, which comes down like a vast, overflowing stream, to dash with its ceaseless effort and accumulated mass against some crime that men would overlook, or some injustice which they would sanction. Doubtless there is foam on its eddies, mud in its bed: thousands of strange creatures sport wildly on its surface. Burke does not select, he lavishes; he casts forth by myriads his teeming fancies, his emphasized and harsh words, declamations and apostrophes, jests and execrations, the whole grotesque or horrible assemblage of the distant regions and populous cities which his unwearied learning or fancy has traversed. He says, speaking of the usurious loans, at forty-eight per cent, and at compound interest, by which Englishmen had devastated India, that

"That debt forms the foul putrid mucus, in which are engendered the whole brood of creeping ascarides, all the endless involutions, the eternal knot, added to a knot of those inexpugnable tape-worms which devour the nutriment, and eat up the bowels of India." [12]

Nothing strikes him as excessive in speech, neither the description of tortures, nor the atrocity of his images, nor the deafening racket of his antitheses, nor the prolonged trumpet-blast of his curses, nor the vast oddity of his jests. To the Duke of Bedford, who had reproached him with his pension, he answers:

"The grants to the house of Russell were so enormous, as not only to outrage œconomy, but even to stagger credibility. The Duke of Bedford is the leviathan among all the creatures of the crown. He tumbles about his unwieldy bulk; he plays and frolics in the ocean of the royal bounty. Huge as he is, and whilst 'he lies floating many a rood,' he is still a creature. His ribs, his fins, his whalebone, his blubber, the very spiracles through which he spouts a torrent of brine against his origin, and covers me all over with the spray—everything of him and about him is from the throne." [13]

Burke has no taste, nor have his compeers. The fine Greek or French deduction has never found a place among the Germanic nations; with them all is heavy or ill-refined. It is of no use for Burke to study Cicero, and to confine his dashing force in the orderly channels of Latin rhetoric; he continues half a barbarian, battening in exaggeration and violence; but his fire is so

[12] Burke's Works, iv. 282.
[13] Ibid. viii. 35; "A Letter to a Noble Lord."

sustained, his conviction so strong, his emotion so warm and abundant, that we give way to him, forget our repugnance, see in his irregularities and his outbursts only the outpourings of a great heart and a deep mind, too open and too full; and we wonder with a sort of strange veneration at this extraordinary outflow, impetuous as a torrent, broad as a sea, in which the inexhaustible variety of colors and forms undulates beneath the sun of a splendid imagination, which lends to this muddy surge all the brilliancy of its rays.

Section IX.—Doctrines of the French Revolution Contrasted with the Conservative Tendencies of the English People

If you wish for a comprehensive view of all these personages, study Sir Joshua Reynolds,[1] and then look at the fine French portraits of this time, the cheerful ministers, gallant and charming archbishops, Marshal de Saxe, who in the Strasburg monument goes down to his tomb with the grace and ease of a courtier on the staircase at Versailles. In England, under skies drowned in pallid mists, amid soft, vaporous clouds, appear expressive or contemplative heads: the rude energy of the character has not awed the artist; the coarse bloated animal; the strange and ominous bird of prey; the growling jaws of the fierce bulldog—he has put them all in: levelling politeness has not in his pictures effaced individual asperities under uniform pleasantness. Beauty is there, but only in the cold decision of look, in the deep seriousness and sad nobility of the pale countenance, in the conscientious gravity and the indomitable resolution of the restrained gesture. In place of Lely's courtesans, we see by their side chaste ladies, sometimes severe and active; good mothers surrounded by their little children, who kiss them and embrace one another: morality is here, and with it the sentiment of home and family, propriety of dress, a pensive air, the correct deportment of Miss Burney's heroines. They are men who have done the world some service: Bakewell transforms and reforms their cattle; Arthur Young their agriculture; Howard their prisons; Arkwright and Watt their industry; Adam Smith their political economy; Bentham their penal law; Locke, Hutcheson, Ferguson, Bishop Butler, Reid, Stewart,

[1] Lord Heathfield, the Earl of Mansfield, Major Stringer Lawrence, Lord Ashburton, Lord Edgecombe, and many others.

Price, their psychology and their morality. They have purified their private manners, they now purify their public manners. They have settled their government, they have established themselves in their religion. Johnson is able to say with truth, that no nation in the world better tills its soil and its mind. There is none so rich, so free, so well nourished, where public and private efforts are directed with such assiduity, energy, and ability towards the improvement of public and private affairs. One point alone is wanting: lofty speculation. It is just this point which, when all others are wanting, constitutes at this moment the glory of France; and English caricatures show, with a good appreciation of burlesque, face to face and in strange contrast, on one side the Frenchman in a tumbledown cottage, shivering, with long teeth, thin, feeding on snails and a handful of roots, but otherwise charmed with his lot, consoled by a republican cockade and humanitarian programmes; on the other, the Englishman, red and puffed out with fat, seated at his table in a comfortable room, before a dish of most juicy roast-beef, with a pot of foaming ale, busy in grumbling against the public distress and the treacherous ministers, who are going to ruin everything.

Thus Englishmen arrive on the threshold of the French Revolution, Conservatives and Christians facing the French freethinkers and revolutionaries. Without knowing it, the two nations have rolled onwards for two centuries towards this terrible shock; without knowing it, they have only been working to make it worse. All their effort, all their ideas, all their great men have accelerated the motion which hurls them towards the inevitable conflict. A hundred and fifty years of politeness and general ideas have persuaded the French to trust in human goodness and pure reason. A hundred and fifty years of moral reflection and political strife have attached the Englishman to positive religion and an established constitution. Each has his contrary dogma and his contrary enthusiasm. Neither understands and each detests the other. What one calls reform, the other calls destruction; what one reveres as the establishment of right, the other curses as the overthrow of right; what seems to one the annihilation of superstition, seems to the other the abolition of morality. Never was the contrast of two spirits and two civilizations shown in clearer characters, and it was Burke who,

with the superiority of a thinker and the hostility of an Englishman, took it in hand to show this to the French.

He is indignant at this "tragi-comick farce," which at Paris is called the regeneration of humanity. He denies that the contagion of such folly can ever poison England. He laughs at the cockneys, who, roused by the pratings of democratic societies, think themselves on the brink of a revolution:

"Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilst thousands of great cattle, reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field; that of course, they are many in number; or that, after all, they are other than the little shrivelled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome insects of the hour." [2]

Real England hates and detests the maxims and actions of the French Revolution: [3]

"The very idea of the fabrication of a new government is enough to fill us with disgust and horror. We wished . . . to derive all we possess as an inheritance from our forefathers. . . . (We claim) our franchises not as the rights of men, but as the rights of Englishmen." [4]

Our rights do not float in the air, in the imagination of philosophers; they are put down in Magna Charta. We despise this abstract verbiage, which deprives man of all equity and respect to puff him up with presumption and theories:

"We have not been drawn and trussed, in order that we may be filled, like stuffed birds in a museum, with chaff and rags and paltry blurred shreds of paper about the rights of men." [5]

Our constitution is not a fictitious contract, like that of Rousseau, sure to be violated in three months, but a real contract, by which king, nobles, people, church, everyone holds the other, and is himself held. The crown of the prince and the privilege of the noble are as sacred as the land of the peasant and the tool of the working-man. Whatever be the acquisition or the inheritance, we respect it in every man, and our law has but one object, which is, to preserve to each his property and his rights.

[2] Burke's Works, v. 165; "Reflections on the Revolution in France."

[3] "I almost venture to affirm, that not one in a hundred amongst us participates in the triumph of the revolution society."—Ibid.

[4] Ibid. 75.

[5] Ibid. 166.

"We fear God; we look up with awe to kings; with affection to parliaments; with duty to magistrates; with reverence to priests; and with respect to nobility." [6]

"There is not one public man in this kingdom who does not reprobate the dishonest, perfidious, and cruel confiscation which the National Assembly has been compelled to make. . . . Church and State are ideas inseparable in our minds. . . . Our education is in a manner wholly in the hands of ecclesiasticks, and in all stages, from infancy to manhood. . . . They never will suffer the fixed estate of the church to be converted into a pension, to depend on the treasury. . . . They made their church like their nobility, independent. They can see without pain or grudging an archbishop precede a duke. They can see a Bishop of Durham or a Bishop of Winchester in possession of ten thousand a year." [7]

We will never suffer the established domain of our church to be converted into a pension, so as to place it in dependence on the treasury. We have made our church as our king and our nobility, independent. We are shocked at your robbery—first, because it is an outrage upon property; next, because it is an attack upon religion. We hold that there exists no society without belief, and we feel that, in exhausting the source, you dry up the whole stream. We have rejected as a poison the infidelity which defiled the beginning of our century and of yours, and we have purged ourselves of it, whilst you have been saturated with it.

"Who, born within the last forty years, has read one word of Collins, and Toland, and Tindal, . . . and that whole race who called themselves Freethinkers?" [8]

"We are Protestants, not from indifference, but from zeal.

"Atheism is against not only our reason, but our instincts.

"We are resolved to keep an established church, an established monarchy, an established aristocracy, and an established democracy, each in the degree it exists, and in no greater." [9]

We base our establishment upon the sentiment of right, and the sentiment of right on reverence for God.

In place of right and of God, whom do you, Frenchmen, acknowledge as master? The sovereign people, that is, the arbitrary inconstancy of a numerical majority. We deny that the majority has a right to destroy a constitution.

[6] Burke's "Reflections," v. 167. [7] Ibid. 188. [8] Ibid. 172. [9] Ibid. 175.

" The constitution of a country being once settled upon some compact, tacit or expressed, there is no power existing of force to alter it, without the breach of the covenant, or the consent of all the parties." [10]

We deny that a majority has a right to make a constitution; unanimity must first have conferred this right on the majority. We deny that brute force is a legitimate authority, and that a populace is a nation.[11]

" A true natural aristocracy is not a separate interest in the state or separable from it. . . . When great multitudes act together under that discipline of nature, I recognise the people; . . . when you separate the common sort of men from their proper chieftains so as to form them into an adverse army, I no longer know that venerable object called the people in such a disbanded race of deserters and vagabonds." [12]

We detest with all our power of hatred the right of tyranny which you give them over others, and we detest still more the right of insurrection which you give them against themselves. We believe that a constitution is a trust transmitted to this generation by the past, to be handed down to the future, and that if a generation can dispose of it as its own, it ought also to respect it as belonging to others. We hold that, " by this unprincipled facility of changing the state as often, and as much, and in as many ways as there are floating fancies and fashions, the whole chain and continuity of the commonwealth would be broken. No one generation could link with the other. Men would become little better than the flies of a summer." [13] We repudiate this meagre and coarse reason, which separates a man from his ties, and sees in him only the present, which separates a man from society, and counts him as only one head in a flock. We despise these " metaphysics of an undergraduate and the mathematics of an exciseman," by which you cut up the state and man's rights according to square miles and numerical unities. We have a horror of that cynical coarseness by which " all the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off," by which

[10] Burke's Works, vi. 201; " Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs."

[11] " A government of five hundred country attornies and obscure curates is not good for twenty-four millions of men, though it were chosen by eight and forty millions. . . . As to the share of power, authority, direction, which each individual ought to have in the management of the state, that I must deny to be amongst the direct original rights of man in civil society." —Ibid. v. 109; " Reflections."

[12] Ibid. vi. 219; " Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs."

[13] Ibid. v. 181; " Reflections."

" now a queen is but a woman, and a woman is but an animal," [14] which cuts down chivalric and religious spirit, the two crowns of humanity, to plunge them, together with learning, into the popular mire, to be " trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude." [15] We have a horror of this systematic levelling which disorganizes civil society. Burke continues thus:

" I am satisfied beyond a doubt that the project of turning a great empire into a vestry, or into a collection of vestries, and of governing it in the spirit of a parochial administration, is senseless and absurd, in any mode or with any qualifications. I can never be convinced that the scheme of placing the highest powers of the state in churchwardens and constables, and other such officers, guided by the prudence of litigious attornies, and Jew brokers, and set in action by shameless women of the lowest condition, by keepers of hotels, taverns, and brothels, by pert apprentices, by clerks, shop-boys, hairdressers, fiddlers, and dancers on the stage (who, in such a commonwealth as yours, will in future overbear, as already they have overborne, the sober incapacity of dull uninstructed men, of useful but laborious occupations), can never be put into any shape that must not be both disgraceful and destructive." [16]
" If monarchy should ever obtain an entire ascendancy in France, it will probably be . . . the most completely arbitrary power that has ever appeared on earth. France will be wholly governed by the agitators in corporations, by societies in the towns formed of directors in assignats, . . . attornies, agents, money-jobbers, speculators, and adventurers, composing an ignoble oligarchy founded on the destruction of the crown, the church, the nobility, and the people." [17]

This is what Burke wrote in 1790 at the dawn of the first French Revolution.[18] Two years after the people of Birmingham destroyed the houses of some English democrats, and the miners of Wednesbury went out in a body from their pits to

[14] Burke's Works, v. 151; " Reflections."
[15] Ibid. 154.
[16] Ibid. vi. 5; " Letter to a Member of the National Assembly."
[17] Ibid. v. 349; " Reflections."
[18] " The effect of liberty to individuals is, that they may do what they please: we ought to see what it will please them to do, before we risk congratulations which may be soon turned into complaints. . . . Strange chaos of levity and ferocity, . . . monstrous tragi-comic scene. . . . After I have read the list of the persons and descriptions elected into the Tiers-Etat, nothing which they afterwards did could appear astonishing. . . . Of any practical experience in the state, not one man was to be found. The best were only men of theory. The majority was composed of practitioners in the law, . . . active chicaners, . . . obscure provincial advocates, stewards of petty local jurisdictions, country attornies, notaries, etc."—Ibid. v. 37 and 90. That which offends Burke, and even makes him very uneasy, was, that no representatives of the " natural landed interests " were among the representatives of the Tiers-Etat. Let us give one quotation more, for really this political clairvoyance is akin to genius: " Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites. . . . Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere; and the less of it there is within the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

come to the succor of " king and church." If we compare one crusade with another, scared England was as fanatical as enthusiastic France. Pitt declared that they could not " treat with a nation of atheists." [19] Burke said that the war was not between people and people, but between property and brute force. The rage of execration, invective, and destruction mounted on both sides like a conflagration.[20] It was not the collision of the two governments, but of the two civilizations and the two doctrines. The two vast machines, driven with all their momentum and velocity, met face to face, not by chance, but by fatality. A whole age of literature and philosophy had been necessary to amass the fuel which filled their sides, and laid down the rail which guided their course. In this thundering clash, amid these ebullitions of hissing and fiery vapor, in these red flames which licked the boilers, and whirled with a rumbling noise upwards to the heavens, an attentive spectator may still discover the nature and the accumulation of the force which caused such an outburst, dislocated such iron plates, and strewed the ground with such ruins.

[19] Pitt's Speeches, 3 vols. 1808, ii. p. 81, on negotiating for peace with France, January 26, 1795. Pitt says, however, in the same speech: " God forbid that we should look on the body of the people of France as atheists."—Tr.

[20] " Letters to a Noble Lord; " " Letters on a Regicide Peace."

CHAPTER FOURTH

ADDISON

Section I.—The Significance of the Writings of Addison and Swift

IN this vast transformation of mind which occupies the whole eighteenth century, and gives England its political and moral standing, two eminent men appear in politics and morality, both accomplished writers—the most accomplished yet seen in England: both accredited mouthpieces of a party, masters in the art of persuasion and conviction; both limited in philosophy and art, incapable of considering sentiments in a disinterested fashion: always bent on seeing in things motives for approbation or blame; otherwise differing, and even in contrast with one another; one happy, benevolent, beloved; the other hated, hating, and most unfortunate: the one a partisan of liberty and the noblest hopes of man; the other an advocate of a retrograde party, and an eager detractor of humanity: the one measured, delicate, furnishing a model of the most solid English qualities, perfected by continental culture; the other unbridled and formidable, showing an example of the harshest English instincts, luxuriating without limit or rule in every kind of devastation and amid every degree of despair. To penetrate to the interior of this civilization and this people, there are no means better than to pause and dwell upon Swift and Addison.

Section II.—Addison's Character and Education

"I have often reflected," says Steele of Addison, "after a night spent with him, apart from all the world, that I had had the pleasure of conversing with an intimate acquaintance of Terence and Catullus, who had all their wit and nature heightened with humor, more exquisite and delightful than any other

man ever possessed." [1] And Pope, a rival of Addison, and a bitter rival, adds: "His conversation had something in it more charming that I have found in any other man." [2] These sayings express the whole talent of Addison: his writings are conversations, masterpieces of English urbanity and reason; nearly all the details of his character and life have contributed to nourish this urbanity and this reasoning.

At the age of seventeen we find him at Oxford, studious and peaceful, loving solitary walks under the elm-avenues, and amongst the beautiful meadows on the banks of the Cherwell. From the thorny brake of school education he chose the only flower—a withered one, doubtless, Latin verse, but one which, compared to the erudition, to the theology, to the logic of the time, is still a flower. He celebrates, in strophes or hexameters, the peace of Ryswick, or the system of Dr. Burnet; he composes little ingenious poems on a puppet-show, on the battle of the pigmies and cranes; he learns to praise and jest—in Latin it is true—but with such success that his verses recommend him for the rewards of the ministry, and even come to the knowledge of Boileau. At the same time he imbues himself with the Latin poets; he knows them by heart, even the most affected, Claudian and Prudentius; presently in Italy quotations will rain from his pen; from top to bottom, in all its nooks, and under all its aspects, his memory is stuffed with Latin verses. We see that he loves them, scans them with delight, that a fine cæsura charms him, that every delicacy touches him, that no hue of art or emotion escapes him, that his literary tact is refined, and prepared to relish all the beauties of thought and expression. This inclination, too long retained, is a sign of a little mind, I allow; a man ought not to spend so much time in inventing centos. Addison would have done better to enlarge his knowledge—to study Latin prose-writers, Greek literature, Christian antiquity, modern Italy, which he hardly knew. But this limited culture, leaving him weaker, made him more refined. He formed his art by studying only the monuments of Latin urbanity; he acquired a taste for the elegance and refinements, the triumphs and artifices of style; he became self-contemplative, correct, capable of knowing and perfecting his own tongue. In the designed rem-

[1] Addison's Works, ed. Hurd, 6 vols. v. 151; Steele's Letter to Mr. Congreve.
[2] Ibid. vi. 729.

iniscences, the happy allusions, the discreet tone of his little poems, I find beforehand many traits of the "Spectator."

Leaving the university, he travelled for a long time in the two most polished countries in the world, France and Italy. He lived at Paris, in the house of the ambassador, in the regular and brilliant society which gave fashion to Europe; he visited Boileau, Malebranche, saw with somewhat malicious curiosity the fine curtsies of the painted and affected ladies of Versailles, the grave and almost stale civilities of the fine speakers and fine dancers of the other sex. He was amused at the complimentary intercourse of Frenchmen, and remarked that when a tailor accosted a shoemaker, he congratulated himself on the honor of saluting him. In Italy he admired the works of art, and praised them in a letter,[3] in which the enthusiasm is rather cold, but very well expressed.[4] He had the fine training which is now given to young men of the higher ranks. And it was not the amusements of cockneys or the racket of taverns which employed him. His beloved Latin poets followed him everywhere. He had read them over before setting out; he recited their verses in the places which they mention. "I must confess, it was not one of the least entertainments that I met with in travelling, to examine these several descriptions, as it were, upon the spot, and to compare the natural face of the country with the landscapes that the poets have given us of it."[5] These were the pleasures of an epicure in literature; there could be nothing more literary and less pedantic than the account which he wrote on his return.[6] Presently this refined and delicate curiosity led him to coins. "There is a great affinity," he says, "between them and poetry;" for they serve as a commentary upon ancient authors; an effigy of the Graces makes a verse of Horace visible. And on this subject he wrote a very agreeable dialogue, choosing for personages well-bred men: "all three very well versed in the politer parts of learning, and had travelled into the most refined nations of Europe. . . . Their design was to pass away the heat of the summer among the fresh breezes that rise from the river (the

[3] Addison's Works, 4 vols. 4to, Tonson, 1721, vol. i. 43. A letter to Lord Halifax (1701).

[4] "Renowned in verse, each shady thicket grows,
And every stream in heavenly numbers flows. . . .
Where the smooth chisel all its force has shown,
And softened into flesh the rugged stone. . . .
Here pleasing airs my ravisht soul confound
With circling notes and labyrinths of sound."—Ibid.

[5] Preface to "Remarks on Italy," ii.

[6] "Remarks on Italy."

Thames), and the agreeable mixture of shades and fountains in which the whole country naturally abounds." [7] Then, with a gentle and well-tempered gayety, he laughs at pedants who waste life in discussing the Latin toga or sandal, but pointed out, like a man of taste and wit, the services which coins might render to history and the arts. Was there ever a better education for a literary man of the world? He had already a long time ago acquired the art of fashionable poetry, I mean the correct verses, which are complimentary, or written to order. In all polite society we look for the adornment of thought; we desire for it rare, brilliant, beautiful dress, to distinguish it from vulgar thoughts, and for this reason we impose upon it rhyme, metre, noble expression; we keep for it a store of select terms, verified metaphors, suitable images, which are like an aristocratic wardrobe, in which it is hampered but must adorn itself. Men of wit are bound to make verses for it, and in a certain style just as others must display their lace, and that after a certain pattern. Addison put on this dress, and wore it correctly and easily, passing without difficulty from one habit to a similar one, from Latin to English verse. His principal piece, "The Campaign," [8] is an excellent model of the agreeable and classical style. Each verse is full, perfect in itself, with a clever antithesis, a good epithet, or a concise picture. Countries have noble names; Italy is Ausonia, the Black Sea is the Scythian Sea; there are mountains of dead, and a thunder of eloquence sanctioned by Lucian; pretty turns of oratorical address imitated from Ovid; cannons are mentioned in poetic periphrases, as later in Delille.[9] The poem is an official and decorative amplification, like that which Voltaire wrote afterwards on the battle of Fontenoy. Addison does yet better; he wrote an opera, a comedy, a much admired tragedy on the death of Cato. Such writing was always, in the last century, a passport to a good style and to fashionable society. A young man in Voltaire's time, on leaving college, had to write

[7] "First Dialogue on Medals," i. 435. [8] On the victory of Blenheim, i. 63.

[9] "With floods of gore that from the vanquished fell
The marshes stagnate and the rivers swell,
Mountains of slain, etc. . . . . .
Rows of hollow brass,
Tube behind tube the dreadful entrance keep,
Whilst in their wombs ten thousand thunders sleep. . . .

". . . Here shattered walls, like broken rocks, from far
Rise up in hideous views, the guilt of war;
Whilst here the vine o'er hills of ruin climbs
Industrious to conceal great Bourbon's crimes."—Vol. i. 63-82.

his tragedy as now he must write an article on political economy; it was then a proof that he could converse with ladies, as now it is a proof that he can argue with men. He learned the art of being amusing, of touching the heart, of talking of love; he thus escaped from dry or special studies; he could choose among events or sentiments those which interest or please; he was able to hold his own in good society, to be sometimes agreeable there, never to offend. Such is the culture which these works gave Addison; it is of slight importance that they are poor. In them he dealt with the passions, with humor. He produced in his opera some lively and smiling pictures; in his tragedy some noble or moving accents; he emerged from reasoning and pure dissertation; he acquired the art of rendering morality visible and truth expressive; he knew how to give ideas a physiognomy, and that an attractive one. Thus was the finished writer perfected by contact with ancient and modern, foreign and national urbanity, by the sight of the fine arts, by experience of the world and study of style, by continuous and delicate choice of all that is agreeable in things and men, in life and art.

His politeness received from his character a singular bent and charm. It was not external, simply voluntary and official; it came from the heart. He was gentle and kind, of refined sensibility, so shy even as to remain silent and seem dull in a large company or before strangers, only recovering his spirits before intimate friends, and confessing that only two persons can converse together. He could not endure an acrimonious discussion; when his opponent was intractable, he pretended to approve, and for punishment, plunged him discreetly into his own folly. He withdrew by preference from political arguments; being invited to deal with them in the "Spectator," he contented himself with inoffensive and general subjects, which could interest all whilst offending none. It would have pained him to give others pain. Though a very decided and steady Whig, he continued moderate in polemics; and in an age when the winners in the political fight were ready to ruin their opponents or to bring them to the block, he confined himself to show the faults of argument made by the Tories, or to rail courteously at their prejudices. At Dublin he went first of all to shake hands with Swift, his great and fallen adversary. Insulted bitterly by Dennis and Pope, he refused to employ against them his influence or his wit,

and praised Pope to the end. What can be more touching, when we have read his life, than his essay on kindness? we perceive that he is unconsciously speaking of himself:

"There is no society or conversation to be kept up in the world without good-nature, or something which must bear its appearance, and supply its place. For this reason mankind have been forced to invent a kind of artificial humanity, which is what we express by the word good-breeding. . . . The greatest wits I have conversed with are men eminent for their humanity. . . . Good-nature is generally born with us; health, prosperity, and kind treatment from the world are great cherishers of it where they find it." [10]

It so happens that he is involuntarily describing his own charm and his own success. It is himself that he is unveiling; he was very prosperous, and his good fortune spread itself around him in affectionate sentiments, in constant consideration for others, in calm cheerfulness. At college he was distinguished; his Latin verses made him a fellow at Oxford; he spent ten years there in grave amusements and in studies which pleased him. Dryden, the prince of literature, praised him in the highest terms, when Addison was only twenty-two. When he left Oxford, the ministry gave him a pension of three hundred pounds to finish his education, and prepare him for public service. On his return from his travels, his poem on Blenheim placed him in the first rank of the Whigs. He became twice Secretary for Ireland, Under-Secretary of State, a member of Parliament, one of the principal Secretaries of State. Party hatred spared him; amid the almost universal defeat of the Whigs, he was re-elected member of Parliament; in the furious war of Whigs and Tories, both united to applaud his tragedy of "Cato"; the most cruel pamphleteers respected him; his uprightness, his talent, seemed exalted by common consent above discussion. He lived in abundance, activity, and honors, wisely and usefully, amid the assiduous admiration and constant affection of learned and distinguished friends, who could never have too much of his conversation, amid the applause of all the good men and all the cultivated minds of England. If twice the fall of his party seemed to destroy or retard his fortune, he maintained his position without much effort, by reflection and coolness, prepared for all that might happen, accepting mediocrity, confirmed in a

[10] "Spectator," No. 169.

natural and acquired calmness, accommodating himself without yielding to men, respectful to the great without degrading himself, free from secret revolt or internal suffering. These are the sources of his talent; could any be purer or finer? could anything be more engaging than worldly polish and elegance, without the factitious ardor and the complimentary falsehoods of the world? Where shall we look for more agreeable conversation than that of a good and happy man, whose knowledge, taste, and wit, are only employed to give us pleasure?

Section III.—Addison's Seriousness.—His Nobility of Character

This pleasure will be useful to us. Our interlocutor is as grave as he is polite; he will and can instruct as well as amuse us; his education has been as solid as it has been elegant; he even confesses in the "Spectator" that he prefers the serious to the humorous style. He is naturally reflective, silent, attentive. He has studied literature, men, and things, with the conscientiousness of a scholar and an observer. When he travelled in Italy, it was in the English style, noting the difference of manners, the peculiarities of the soil, the good and ill effects of various governments; providing himself with precise memoirs, circumstantial statistics on taxes, buildings, minerals, climate, harbors, administration, and on a great many other things.[1] An English lord, who travels in Holland, goes simply into a cheese-shop, in order to see,for himself all the stages of the manufacture; he returns, like Addison, provided with exact statistics; complete notes; this mass of verified information is the foundation of the common-sense of Englishmen. Addison added to it experience of business, having been successively, or at the same time, a journalist, a member of Parliament, a statesman, hand and heart in all the fights and chances of party. Mere literary education only makes good talkers, able to adorn and publish ideas which they do not possess, and which others furnish for them. If writers wish to invent, they must look to events and men, not to books and drawing-rooms; the conversation of special men is more useful to them than the study of perfect periods; they cannot think for themselves, but in so far as they

[1] See, for instance, his chapter on the republic of San Marino.

have lived or acted. Addison knew how to act and live. When we read his reports, letters, and discussions, we feel that politics and government have given him half his mind. To exercise patronage, to handle money, to interpret the law, to divine the motives of men, to foresee the changes of public opinion, to be compelled to judge rightly, quickly, and twenty times a day, on present and great interests, looked after by the public and under the espionage of enemies; all this nourished his reason and sustained his discourses. Such a man might judge and counsel his fellows; his judgments were not amplifications arranged by a process of the brain, but observations controlled by experience: he might be listened to on moral subjects as a natural philosopher was on subjects connected with physics; we feel that he spoke with authority, and that we were instructed.

After having listened a little, people felt themselves better; for they recognized in him from the first a singularly lofty soul, very pure, so much attached to uprightness that he made it his constant care and his dearest pleasure. He naturally loved beautiful things, goodness and justice, science and liberty. From an early age he had joined the Liberal party, and he continued in it to the end, hoping the best of human virtue and reason, noting the wretchedness into which nations fell who abandoned their dignity with their independence.[2] He followed the grand discoveries of the new physical sciences, so as to give him more exalted ideas of the works of God. He loved the deep and serious emotions which reveal to us the nobility of our nature and the infirmity of our condition. He employed all his talent and all his writings in giving us the notion of what we are worth, and of what we ought to be. Of two tragedies which he composed or contemplated, one was on the death of Cato, the most virtuous of the Romans; the other on that of Socrates, the most virtuous of the Greeks. At the end of the first he felt some scruples; and for fear of being accused of finding an excuse for

[2] Letter from Italy to Lord Halifax:

"O Liberty, thou Goddess heavenly bright,
Profuse of bliss, and pregnant with delight;
Eternal pleasures in thy presence reign,
And smiling plenty leads thy wanton train. . . .
'Tis liberty that crowns Britannia's isle,
And makes her barren rocks and her bleak mountains smile."—i. 53.

About the republic of San Marino he writes:

"Nothing can be a greater instance of the natural love that mankind has for liberty, and of their aversion to an arbitrary government, than such a savage mountain covered with people, and the Campagna of Rome, which lies in the same country, almost destitute of inhabitants."—"Remarks on Italy," ii. 48.

suicide, he gave Cato some remorse. His opera of "Rosamond" ends with the injunction to prefer pure love to forbidden joys; the "Spectator," the "Tatler," the "Guardian," are mere lay sermons. Moreover, he put his maxims into practice. When he was in office, his integrity was perfect; he conferred often obligations on those whom he did not know—always gratuitously, refusing presents, under whatever form they were offered. When out of office, his loyalty was perfect; he maintained his opinions and friendships without bitterness or baseness, boldly praising his fallen protectors,[3] fearing not thereby to expose himself to the loss of his only remaining resources. He possessed an innate nobility of character, and reason aided him in keeping it. He considered that there is common-sense in honesty. His first care, as he said, was to range his passions on the side of truth. He had made for himself a portrait of a rational creature, and he conformed his conduct to this by reflection as much as by instinct. He rested every virtue on an order of principles and proofs. His logic fed his morality, and the uprightness of his mind completed the singleness of his heart. His religion, English in every sense, was after the like fashion. He based his faith on a regular succession of historical discussions:[4] he established the existence of God by a regular series of moral deductions; minute and solid demonstration was throughout the guide and foundation of his beliefs and emotions. Thus disposed, he loved to conceive God as the rational head of the world; he transformed accidents and necessities into calculations and directions; he saw order and providence in the conflict of things, and felt around him the wisdom which he attempted to establish in himself. Addison, good and just himself, trusted in God, also a being good and just. He lived willingly in His knowledge and presence, and thought of the unknown future which was to complete human nature and accomplish moral order. When the end came, he went over his life, and discovered that he had done some wrong or other to Gay: this wrong was doubtless slight, since Gay had never thought of it. Addison begged him to come to his bedside, and asked his pardon. When he was about to die, he wished still to be useful, and sent for his step-son, Lord Warwick, whose careless life had caused him some uneasiness. He was so weak that at first he

[3] Halifax, for instance.

[4] "Of the Christian Religion."

could not speak. The young man, after waiting awhile, said to him: "Dear sir, you sent for me, I believe; I hope that you have some commands; I shall hold them most sacred." The dying man with an effort pressed his hand, and replied gently: "See in what peace a Christian can die." [5] Shortly afterwards he expired.

Section IV.—The Morality of Addison's Essays

"The great and only end of these speculations," says Addison, in one of his "Spectators," "is to banish vice and ignorance out of the territories of Great Britain." And he kept his word. His papers are wholly moral—advices to families, reprimands to thoughtless women, a sketch of an honest man, remedies for the passions, reflections on God and a future life. I hardly know, or rather I know very well, what success a newspaper full of sermons would have in France. In England it was extraordinary, equal to that of the most popular modern novelists. In the general downfall of the daily and weekly papers ruined by the Stamp Act,[1] the "Spectator" doubled its price, and held its ground.[2] This was because it offered to Englishmen the picture of English reason: the talent and the teaching were in harmony with the needs of the age and of the country. Let us endeavor to describe this reason, which became gradually eliminated from Puritanism and its rigidity, from the Restoration and its excess. The mind attained its balance, together with religion and the state. It conceived the rule, and disciplined its conduct; it diverged from a life of excess, and confirmed itself in a sensible life; it shunned physical and prescribed moral existence. Addison rejects with scorn gross corporeal pleasure, the brutal joy of noise and motion: "I would nevertheless leave to the consideration of those who are the patrons of this monstrous trial of skill, whether or no they are not guilty, in some measure, of an affront to their species, in treating after this manner the human face divine." [3] "Is it possible that human nature can rejoice in

[5] Addison's Works, Hurd, vi. 525.

[1] The Stamp Act (1712; 10 Anne, c. 19) put a duty of a halfpenny on every printed half sheet or less, and a penny on a whole sheet, besides twelve pence on every advertisement. This Act was repealed in 1855. Swift writes to Stella (August 7, 1712), "Do you know that all Grub Street is ruined by the Stamp Act."—Tr.

[2] The sale of the "Spectator" was considerably diminished through its forced increase of price, and it was discontinued in 1713, the year after the Stamp Act was passed.—Tr.

[3] "Spectator," No. 173.

its disgrace, and take pleasure in seeing its own figure turned to ridicule, and distorted into forms that raise horror and aversion? There is something disingenuous and immoral in the being able to bear such a sight." [4] Of course he sets himself against deliberate shamelessness and the systematic debauchery which were the taste and the shame of the Restoration. He wrote whole articles against young fashionable men, " a sort of vermin " who fill London with their bastards; against professional seducers, who are the " knights-errant " of vice. " When men of rank and figure pass away their lives in these criminal pursuits and practices, they ought to consider that they render themselves more vile and despicable than any innocent man can be, whatever low station his fortune or birth have placed him in." [5] He severely jeers at women who expose themselves to temptations, and whom he calls " salamanders ": " A salamander is a kind of heroine in chastity, that treads upon fire, and lives in the midst of flames without being hurt. A salamander knows no distinction of sex in those she converses with, grows familiar with a stranger at first sight, and is not so narrow-spirited as to observe whether the person she talks to be in breeches or petticoats. She admits a male visitant to her bedside, plays with him a whole afternoon at picquet, walks with him two or three hours by moonlight." [6] He fights like a preacher against the fashion of low dresses, and gravely demands the tucker and modesty of olden times: " To prevent these saucy familiar glances, I would entreat my gentle readers to sew on their tuckers again, to retrieve the modesty of their characters, and not to imitate the nakedness, but the innocence, of their mother Eve. In short, modesty gives the maid greater beauty than even the bloom of youth; it bestows in the wife the dignity of a matron, and reinstates the widow in her virginity." [7] We find also lectures on masquerades which end with rendezvous; precepts on the number of glasses people might drink, and the dishes of which they might eat: condemnations of licentious professors of irreligion and immorality; all maxims now somewhat stale, but then new and useful because Wycherley and Rochester had put into practice and made popular the opposite maxims. Debauchery passed for French and fashionable: this is why Addison pro-

[4] " Tatler," No. 108.
[5] " Guardian," No. 123.
[6] " Spectator," No. 198.
[7] " Guardian," No. 100.

scribes in addition all French frivolities. He laughs at women who receive visitors in their dressing-rooms, and speak aloud at the theatre: "There is nothing which exposes a woman to greater dangers, than that gayety and airiness of temper, which are natural to most of the sex. It should be therefore the concern of every wise and virtuous woman to keep this sprightliness from degenerating into levity. On the contrary, the whole discourse and behavior of the French is to make the sex more fantastical, or (as they are pleased to term it) more awakened, than is consistent either with virtue or discretion." [8] We see already in these strictures the portrait of the sensible housewife, the modest Englishwoman, domestic and grave, wholly taken up with her husband and children. Addison returns a score of times to the artifices, the pretty affected babyisms, the coquetry, the futilities of women. He cannot suffer languishing or lazy habits. He is full of epigrams against flirtations, extravagant toilets, useless visits.[9] He writes a satirical journal of a man who goes to his club, learns the news, yawns, studies the barometer, and thinks his time well occupied. He considers that time is capital, business duty, and life a task.

Is life only a task? If Addison holds himself superior to sensual life, he falls short of philosophical life. His morality, thoroughly English, always drags along among commonplaces, discovering no principles, making no deductions. The fine and lofty aspects of the mind are wanting. He gives useful advice, clear instruction, justified by what happened yesterday, useful for to-morrow. He observes that fathers must not be inflexible, and that they often repent driving their children to despair. He finds that bad books are pernicious, because their durability carries their poison to future ages. He consoles a woman who has lost her sweetheart, by showing her the misfortunes of so many other people who are suffering the greatest evils at the same time. His "Spectator" is only an honest man's manual, and is often like the "Complete Lawyer." It is practical, its aim being not to amuse, but to correct us. The conscientious Protestant, nourished with dissertations and morality, demands an effective monitor and guide; he would like his reading to influence his conduct, and his newspaper to suggest a resolution. To this end Addison seeks motives everywhere. He thinks of the future life,

[8] "Spectator," No. 45.

[9] Ibid. Nos. 317 and 323.

but does not forget the present; he rests virtue on interest rightly understood. He strains no principle to its limits; he accepts them all, as they are to be met with everywhere, according to their manifest goodness, drawing from them only the primary consequences, shunning the powerful logical pressure which spoils all by expressing too much. Let us observe him establishing a maxim, recommending constancy, for instance; his motives are mixed and incongruous: first, inconstancy exposes us to scorn; next, it puts us in continual distraction; again, it hinders us as a rule from attaining our end; moreover, it is the great feature of a human and mortal being; finally, it is more opposed to the inflexible nature of God, who ought to be our model. The whole is illustrated at the close by a quotation from Dryden and a verse from Horace. This medley and jumble describe the ordinary mind which remains on the level of its audience, and the practical mind, which knows how to dominate over its audience. Addison persuades the public, because he draws from the public sources of belief. He is powerful because he is vulgar, and usful because he is narrow.

Let us picture now this mind, so characteristically mediocre, limited to the discovery of good motives of action. What a reflective man, always calm and dignified! What a store he has of resolutions and maxims! All rapture, instinct, inspiration, and caprice, are abolished or disciplined. No case surprises or carries him away. He is always ready and protected; so much so, that he is like an automaton. Argument has frozen and invaded him. Consider, for instance, how he puts us on our guard against involuntary hypocrisy, announcing, explaining, distinguishing the ordinary and extraordinary modes, dragging on with exordiums, preparations, methods, allusions to Scripture.[10] After having read six lines of this morality, a Frenchman would go out for a mouthful of fresh air. What in the name of heaven would he do, if, in order to move him to piety, he was told [11] that God's omniscience and omnipresence furnished us with three kinds of motives, and then subdivided these motives into first, second, and third? To put calculation at every stage; to come with weights, scales, and figures, into the thick of human passions, to label them, classify them like bales, to tell the public that the inventory is complete; to lead them, with the reckoning

[10] "Spectator," No. 399. [11] Ibid. No. 571.

in their hand, and by the mere virtue of statistics, to honor and duty—such is the morality of Addison and of England. It is a sort of commercial common-sense applied to the interests of the soul; a preacher here is only an economist in a white tie, who treats conscience like food, and refutes vice because its introduction is prohibited.

There is nothing sublime or chimerical in the end which he sets before us; all is practical, that is, business-like and sensible; the question is, how "to be easy here and happy afterwards." To be easy is a word which has no French equivalent, meaning that comfortable state of the mind, a middle state between calm satisfaction, approved action and serene conscience. Addison makes it consist in labor and manly functions, carefully and regularly discharged. We must see with what complacency he paints in the "Freeholder" and Sir Roger the grave pleasures of a citizen and proprietor:

"I have rather chosen this title (the Freeholder) than any other, because it is what I most glory in, and what most effectually calls to my mind the happiness of that government under which I live. As a British freeholder, I should not scruple taking place of a French marquis; and when I see one of my countrymen amusing himself in his little cabbage-garden, I naturally look upon him as a greater person than the owner of the richest vineyard in Champagne. . . . There is an unspeakable pleasure in calling anything one's own. A freehold, though it be but in ice and snow, will make the owner pleased in the possession, and stout in the defence of it. . . . I consider myself as one who give my consent to every law which passes. . . . A freeholder is but one remove from a legislator, and for that reason ought to stand up in the defence of those laws which are in some degree of his own making." [12]

These are all English feelings, made up of calculation and pride, energetic and austere; and this portrait is capped by that of the married man:

"Nothing is more gratifying to the mind of man than power or dominion; and this I think myself amply possessed of, as I am the father of a family. I am perpetually taken up in giving out orders, in prescribing duties, in hearing parties, in administering justice, and in distributing rewards and punishments. . . . I look upon my family as a patriarchal sovereignty, in which I am myself both king and priest. . . . When I see my little troop before me, I rejoice in the additions which I have made to my species, to my country, and to my religion, in

[12] "Freeholder," No. 1.

having produced such a number of reasonable creatures, citizens, and Christians. I am pleased to see myself thus perpetuated; and as there is no production comparable to that of a human creature, I am more proud of having been the occasion of ten such glorious productions, than if I had built a hundred pyramids at my own expense, or published as many volumes of the finest wit and learning." [13]

If now we take the man away from his estate and his household, alone with himself, in moments of idleness or reverie, we will find him just as positive. He observes, that he may cultivate his own reasoning power, and that of others; he stores himself with morality; he wishes to make the most of himself and of existence, that is the reason why he thinks of death. The northern races willingly direct their thoughts to final dissolution and the dark future. Addison often chose for his promenade gloomy Westminster Abbey, with its many tombs: "Upon my going into the church I entertained myself with the digging of a grave; and saw in every shovel-full of it that was thrown up the fragment of a bone or skull intermixt with a kind of fresh mouldering earth that some time or other had a place in the composition of a human body. . . . I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together." [14] And suddenly his emotion is transformed into profitable meditations. Underneath his morality is a pair of scales which weigh quantities of happiness. He stirs himself by mathematical comparisons to prefer the future to the present. He tries to realize, amidst an assemblage of dates, the disproportion of our short life to infinity. Thus arises this religion, a product of melancholic temperament and acquired logic, in which man, a sort of calculating Hamlet, aspires to the ideal by making a good business of it, and maintains his poetical sentiments by financial calculations.

In such a subject these habits are offensive. We ought not to try and over-define or prove God; religion is rather a matter of feeling than of science; we compromise it by exacting too rigorous demonstrations, and too precise dogmas. It is the heart which sees heaven; if a man would make me believe in it, as he makes me believe in the antipodes, by geographical accounts and probabilities, I shall barely or not at all believe. Addison has little more than his college or edifying arguments,

[13] "Spectator," No. 500. [14] Ibid. Nos. 26 and 575.

very like those of the Abbé Pluche,[15] which let in objections at every chink, and which we can only regard as dialectical essays or sources of emotion. When we add to these arguments, motives of interest and calculations of prudence, which can make recruits, but not converts, we possess all his proofs. There is an element of coarseness in this fashion of treating divine things, and we like still less the exactness with which he explains God, reducing him to a mere magnified man. This preciseness and this narrowness go so far as to describe heaven:

"Though the Deity be thus essentially present through all the immensity of space, there is one part of it in which he discovers himself in a most transcendent and visible glory. . . . It is here where the glorified body of our Saviour resides, and where all the celestial hierarchies, and the innumerable hosts of angels, are represented as perpetually surrounding the seat of God with hallelujahs and hymns of praise. . . . With how much skill must the throne of God be erected! . . . How great must be the majesty of that place, where the whole art of creation has been employed, and where God has chosen to shew himself in the most magnificent manner! What must be the architecture of infinite power under the direction of infinite wisdom?" [16]

Moreover, the place must be very grand, and they have music there: it is a noble palace; perhaps there are antechambers. We had better not continue the quotation. The same dull and literal precision makes him inquire what sort of happiness the elect have.[17] They will be admitted into the councils of Providence, and will understand all its proceedings: "There is, doubtless, a faculty in spirits by which they apprehend one another as our senses do material objects; and there is no question but our souls, when they are disembodied, or placed in glorified bodies, will by this faculty, in whatever part of space they reside, be always sensible of the Divine Presence." [18] This grovelling philosophy repels us. One word of Addison will justify it, and make us understand it: "The business of mankind in this life is rather to act than to know." Now, such a philosophy is as useful in action as poor in science. All its faults of speculation become merits in practice. It follows in a prosy manner positive religion.[19] What support does it not attain from the authority of

[15] The abbé Pluche (1688-1761) was the author of a "Système de la Nature" and several other works.—Tr.

[16] "Spectator," No. 580; see also No. 531.

[17] Ibid. Nos. 237, 571, 600.

[18] Ibid. No. 571; see also Nos. 237, 600.

[19] "Tatler," No. 257.

an ancient tradition, a national institution, an established priesthood, outward ceremonies every-day customs! It employs as arguments public utility, the example of great minds, heavy logic, literal interpretation, and unmistakable texts. What better means of governing the crowd than to degrade proofs to the vulgarity of its intelligence and needs? It humanizes the Divinity: is it not the only way to make men understand Him? It defines almost obviously a future life: is it not the only way to cause it to be wished for? The poetry of lofty philosophical deductions is weak compared to the inner persuasion, rooted by so many positive and detailed descriptions. In this way an active piety is born and religion thus constructed doubles the force of the moral spring. Addison's is admirable, because it is so strong. Energy of feeling rescues wretchedness of dogma. Beneath his dissertations we feel that he is moved; minutiæ, pedantry disappear. We see in him now only a soul deeply penetrated with adoration and respect; no more a preacher classifying God's attributes, and pursuing his trade as a good logician; but a man who naturally, and of his own bent, returns to a lofty spectacle, goes with awe into all its aspects, and leaves it only with a renewed or overwhelmed heart. The sincerity of his emotions makes us respect even his catechetical prescriptions. He demands fixed days of devotion and meditation to recall us regularly to the thought of our Creator and of our faith. He inserts prayers in his paper. He forbids oaths, and recommends to keep always before us the idea of a sovereign Master:

"Such an habitual homage to the Supreme Being would, in a particular manner, banish from among us that prevailing impiety of using his name on the most trivial occasions. . . . What can we then think of those who make use of so tremendous a name in the ordinary expressions of their anger, mirth, and most impertinent passions? of those who admit it into the most familiar questions, and assertions, ludicrous phrases, and works of humour? not to mention those who violate it by solemn perjuries! It would be an affront to reason to endeavour to set forth the horror and profaneness of such a practice." [20]

If a Frenchman was forbidden to swear, he would probably laugh at the first word of the admonition; in his eyes that is a matter of good taste, not of morality. But if he had heard Addison himself pronouncing what I have written, he would laugh no longer.

[20] "Spectator," No. 531.

Section V.—How Addison made Morality Fashionable.—Characteristics of His Style

It is no small thing to make morality fashionable. Addison did it, and it remained in fashion. Formerly honest men were not polished, and polished men were not honest; piety was fanatical, and urbanity depraved; in manners, as in literature, a man could meet only Puritans or libertines. For the first time Addison reconciled virtue with elegance, taught duty in an accomplished style, and made pleasure subservient to reason:

"It was said of Socrates that he brought Philosophy down from heaven, to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought Philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses. I would therefore, in a very particular manner, recommend these my speculations to all well-regulated families, and set apart an hour in every morning for tea and bread and butter; and would earnestly advise them for their good to order this paper to be punctually served up, and to be looked upon as a part of the tea-equipage." [1]

In this passage we may detect an inclination to smile, a little irony tempers the serious idea; it is the tone of a polished man, who, at the first sign of *ennui*, turns round, delicately laughs, even at himself, and tries to please. It is Addison's general tone.

What an amount of art is necessary to please! First, the art of making one's self understood, at once, always, completely, without difficulty to the reader, without reflection, without attention. Let us figure to ourselves men of the world reading a page between two mouthfuls of "bohea-rolls," ladies interrupting a phrase to ask when the ball begins: three technical or learned words would make them throw the paper down. They only desire distinct terms, in common use, into which wit enters all at once, as it enters ordinary converse; in fact, for them reading is only a conversation, and a better one than usual. For the select world refines language. It does not suffer the risks and approximations of extempore and inexperienced speaking. It requires a knowledge of style, like a knowledge of external forms. It will have exact words to express the fine shades of thought, and measured words to preclude offensive or extreme impressions. It wishes for developed phrases, which, presenting the same idea,

[1] "Spectator," No. 10.

under several aspects, impress it easily upon its desultory mind. It demands harmonies of words, which, presenting a known idea in a smart form, may introduce it in a lively manner to its desultory imagination. Addison gives it all that it desires; his writings are the pure source of classical style; men never spoke better in England. Ornaments abound, and never has rhetoric a share in them. Throughout we have precise contrasts, which serve only for clearness, and are not too prolonged; happy expressions, easily hit on, which give things a new and ingenious turn; harmonious periods, in which the sounds flow into one another with the diversity and sweetness of a quiet stream; a fertile vein of invention and fancy, through which runs the most amiable irony. We trust one example will suffice:

"He is not obliged to attend her (Nature) in the slow advance which she makes from one season to another, or to observe her conduct in the successive production of plants and flowers. He may draw into his description all the beauties of the spring and autumn, and make the whole year contribute something to render it the more agreeable. His rose-trees, woodbines, and jessamines may flower together, and his beds be covered at the same time with lilies, violets, and amaranths. His soil is not restrained to any particular set of plants, but is proper either for oaks or myrtles, and adapts itself to the products of every climate. Oranges may grow wild in it; myrrh may be met with in every hedge; and if he thinks it proper to have a grove of spices, he can quickly command sun enough to raise it. If all this will not furnish an agreeable scene, he can make several new species of flowers, with richer scents and higher colours, than any that grow in the gardens of nature. His concerts of birds may be as full and harmonious, and his woods as thick and gloomy as he pleases. He is at no more expense in a long vista than a short one, and can as easily throw his cascades from a precipice of half a mile high as from one of twenty yards. He has his choice of the winds, and can turn the course of his rivers in all the variety of meanders that are most delightful to the reader's imagination." [2]

I find here that Addison profits by the rights which he grants to others, and is amused in explaining to us how we may amuse ourselves. Such is the charming tone of society. Reading the "Spectator," we fancy it still more amiable than it is: no pretension; no efforts; endless contrivances employed unconsciously, and obtained without asking; the gift of being lively and agreeable; a refined banter, raillery without bitterness, a sustained gayety; the art of finding in everything the most

[2] "Spectator," No. 418.

blooming and the freshest flower, and to smell it without bruising or sullying it; science, politics, experience, morality, bringing their finest fruits, adorning them, offering them at a chosen moment, ready to withdraw them as soon as conversation has enjoyed them, and before it is tired of them; ladies placed in the first rank,[3] arbiters of refinement, surrounded with homage, crowning the politeness of men and the brilliancy of society by the attraction of their toilets, the delicacy of their wit, and the charm of their smiles; such is the familiar spectacle in which the writer has formed and delighted himself.

So many advantages are not without their inconvenience. The compliments of society, which attenuate expressions, blunt the style; by regulating what is instinctive and moderating what is vehement, they make speech threadbare and uniform. We must not always seek to please, above all, to please the ear. M. de Châteaubriand boasted of not admitting a single elision into the song of "Cymodocée"; so much the worse for "Cymodocée." So the commentators who have noted in Addison the balance of his periods, do him an injustice.[4] They explain thus why he slightly wearies us. The rotundity of his phrases is a scanty merit and mars the rest. To calculate longs and shorts, to be always thinking of sounds, of final cadences—all these classical researches spoil a writer. Every idea has its accent, and all our labor ought to be to put it down free and simple on paper, as it is in our mind. We ought to copy and mark our thought with the flow of emotions and images, which raise it, caring for nothing but its exactness and clearness. One true phrase is worth a hundred periods: the first is a document which fixes forever a movement of the heart or the senses; the other is a toy to amuse the empty heads of verse-makers. I would give twenty pages of Fléchier for three lines of Saint-Simon. Regular rhythm mutilates the impetus of natural invention; the shades of inner vision vanish; we see no more a soul which thinks or feels, but fingers which count measures whilst scanning. The continuous period is like the shears of La Quintinie,[5] which clip all the trees round under pretence of beautifying. This is why there is some coldness and monotony in Addison's

[3] "Spectator," Nos. 423, 265.

[4] See, in the notes of No. 409 of the "Spectator," the pretty minute analysis of Hurd, the decomposition of the period, the proportion of long and short syllables, the study of the finals. A musician could not have done better.

[5] La Quintinie (1626-1688), a celebrated gardener under Louis XIV, planned the gardens of Versailles.—Tr.

style. He seems to be listening to himself. He is too measured and correct. His most touching stories, like that of "Theodosius and Constantia," touch us only partially. Who could feel inclined to weep over such periods as these?

"Constantia, who knew that nothing but the report of her marriage could have driven him to such extremities, was not to be comforted: she now accused herself for having so tamely given an ear to the proposal of a husband, and looked upon the new lover as the murderer of Theodosius: in short, she resolved to suffer the utmost effects of her father's displeasure, rather than to comply with a marriage which appeared to her so full of guilt and horror." [6]

Is this the way to paint horror and guilt? Where are the passionate emotions which Addison pretends to paint? The story is related, not seen.

The classical writer simply cannot see. Always measured and rational, his first care is to proportion and arrange. He has his rules in his pocket, and brings them out for everything. He does not rise to the source of the beautiful at once, like genuine artists, by force and lucidity of natural inspiration; he lingers in the middle regions, amid precepts, subject to taste and common-sense. This is why Addison's criticism is so solid and so poor. They who seek ideas will do well not to read his "Essays on Imagination," [7] so much praised, so well written, but so scant of philosophy, and so commonplace, dragged down by the intervention of final causes. His celebrated commentary on "Paradise Lost" is little better than the dissertations of Batteux and Bossu. In one place he compares, almost in a line, Homer, Vergil, and Ovid. The fine arrangement of a poem is with him the highest merit. The pure classics enjoy better arrangement and good order than artless truth and strong originality. They have always their poetic manual in their hands: if we agree with the prearranged pattern, we have genius; if not, we have none. Addison, in praise of Milton, establishes that, according to the rule of epic poetry, the action of "Paradise Lost" is one, complete and great; that its characters are varied and of universal interest, and its sentiments natural, appropriate, and elevated; the style clear, diversified, and sublime. Now we may admire

[6] "Spectator," No. 164. [7] See Ibid. Nos. 411-421.

Milton; he has a testimonial from Aristotle. Listen, for instance, to cold details of classical dissertation:

"Had I followed Monsieur Bossu's method in my first paper on Milton, I should have dated the action of 'Paradise Lost' from the beginning of Raphael's speech in this book." [8]

"But, notwithstanding the fineness of this allegory (Sin and Death) may atone for it (the defect in the subject of his poem) in some measure, I cannot think that persons of such a chimerical existence are proper actors in an epic poem." [9]

Further on Addison defines poetical machines, the conditions of their structure, the advantage of their use. He seems to me a carpenter inspecting a staircase. Do not suppose that artificiality shocks him; on the contrary, he rather admires it. He finds the violent declamations of the Miltonic divinity and the royal compliments indulged in by the persons of the Trinity, sublime. The camps of the angels, their bearing in chapel and barrack, their scholastic disputes, their bitter puritanical or pious royalistic style, do not strike him as false or disagreeable. Adam's pedantry and household lectures appear to him suitable to the state of innocence. In fact, the classics of the last two centuries never looked upon the human mind, except in its cultivated state. The child, the artist, the barbarian, the inspired man, escaped them; so, of course, did all who were beyond humanity; their world was limited to the earth, and to the earth of the study and drawing-rooms; they rose neither to God nor nature, or if they did, it was to transform nature into a well-regulated garden-plot, and God into a moral scrutator. They reduced genius to eloquence, poetry to discourse, the drama to a dialogue. They regarded reason as if it were beauty, a sort of middle faculty, not apt for invention, potent in rules, balancing imagination like conduct, and making taste the arbiter of letters, as it made morality the arbiter of actions. They dispensed with the play on words, the sensual grossness, the flights of imagination, the unlikelihood, the atrocities, and all the bad accompaniments of Shakespeare; [10] but they only half followed him in the deep intuitions by which he pierced the human heart, and discovered therein the god and the animal. They wanted to be moved, but not overwhelmed; they

[8] "Spectator," No. 327. [9] Ibid. No. 273. [10] Ibid. Nos. 39, 40, 58.

allowed themselves to be impressed, but demanded to be pleased. To please rationally was the object of their literature. Such is Addison's criticism, which resembles his art; born, like his art, of classical urbanity; fit, like his art, for the life of the world, having the same solidity and the same limits, because it had the same sources, namely, order and relaxation.

Section VI.—Addison's Gallantry.—His Humor.—Sir Roger de Coverley.—The Vision of Mirza

But we must consider that we are in England, and that we find there many things not agreeable to a Frenchman. In France, the classical age attained perfection; so that, compared to it, other countries lack somewhat of finish. Addison, elegant in his own native country, is not quite so in France. Compared with Tillotson, he is the most charming man possible; compared to Montesquieu, he is only half polished. His converse is hardly sparkling enough; the quick movement, the easy change of tone, the facile smile, readily dropped and readily resumed, are hardly visible. He drags on in long and too uniform phrases; his periods are too square; we might cull a load of useless words. He tells us what he is going to say: he marks divisions and subdivisions; he quotes Latin, even Greek; he displays and protracts without end the serviceable and sticky plaster of his morality. He has no fear of being wearisome. That is not what Englishmen fear. Men who love demonstrative sermons three hours long are not difficult to amuse. Remember that here the women like to go to meeting, and are entertained by listening for half a day to discourses on drunkenness, or on the sliding scale for taxes; these patient creatures do not require that conversation should be always lively and piquant. Consequently they can put up with a less refined politeness and less disguised compliments. When Addison bows to them, which happens often, it is gravely, and his reverence is always accompanied by a warning. Take the following on their gaudy dresses:

"I looked with as much pleasure upon this little party-coloured assembly, as upon a bed of tulips, and did not know at first whether it might not be an embassy of Indian queens; but upon my going about into the pit, and taking them in front, I was immediately undeceived and

saw so much beauty in every face, that I found them all to be English. Such eyes and lips, cheeks and foreheads, could be the growth of no other country. The complexion of their faces hindered me from observing any further the colour of their hoods, though I could easily perceive, by that unspeakable satisfaction which appeared in their looks, that their own thoughts were wholly taken up on those pretty ornaments they wore upon their heads." [1]

In this discreet raillery, modified by an almost official admiration, we perceive an English mode of treating women: man, by her side, is always a lay-preacher; they are for him charming children, or useful housewives, never queens of the drawing-room, or equals, as amongst the French. When Addison wishes to bring back the Jacobite ladies to the Protestant party, he treats them almost like little girls, to whom we promise, if they will be good, to restore their doll or their cake:

"They should first reflect on the great sufferings and persecutions to which they expose themselves by the obstinacy of their behaviour. They lose their elections in every club where they are set up for toasts. They are obliged by their principles to stick a patch on the most unbecoming side of their foreheads. They forego the advantage of birthday suits. . . . They receive no benefit from the army, and are never the better for all the young fellows that wear hats and feathers. They are forced to live in the country and feed their chickens; at the same time that they might show themselves at court, and appear in brocade, if they behaved themselves well. In short, what must go to the heart of every fine woman, they throw themselves quite out of the fashion. . . . A man is startled when he sees a pretty bosom heaving with such party-rage, as is disagreeable even in that sex which is of a more coarse and rugged make. And yet such is our misfortune, that we sometimes see a pair of stays ready to burst with sedition; and hear the most masculine passions expressed in the sweetest voices. . . . Where a great number of flowers grow, the ground at distance seems entirely covered with them, and we must walk into it before we can distinguish the several weeds that spring up in such a beautiful mass of colours." [2]

This gallantry is too deliberate; we are somewhat shocked to see a woman touched by such thoughtful hands. It is the urbanity of a moralist; albeit he is well-bred, he is not quite amiable; and if a Frenchman can receive from him lessons of pedagogy and conduct, Addison might come over to France to find models of manners and conversation.

If the first care of a Frenchman in society is to be amiable,

[1] "Spectator," No. 265. [2] "Freeholder," No. 26.

that of an Englishman is to be dignified; their mood leads them to immobility, as ours to gestures; and their pleasantry is as grave as ours is gay. Laughter with them is inward; they shun giving themselves up to it; they are amused silently. Let us make up our mind to understand this kind of temper, it will end by pleasing us. When phlegm is united to gentleness, as in Addison, it is as agreeable as it is piquant. We are charmed to meet a lively man, who is yet master of himself. We are astonished to see these contrary qualities together. Each heightens and modifies the other. We are not repelled by venomous bitterness, as in Swift, or by continuous buffoonery, as in Voltaire. We enjoy altogether the rare union, which for the first time combines serious bearing and good humor. Read this little satire against the bad taste of the stage and the public:

"There is nothing that of late years has afforded matter of greater amusement to the town than Signor Nicolini's combat with a lion in the Haymarket, which has been very often exhibited to the general satisfaction of most of the nobility and gentry in the kingdom of Great Britain. . . . The first lion was a candle-snuffer, who being a fellow of a testy, choleric temper, overdid his part, and would not suffer himself to be killed so easily as he ought to have done. . . . The second lion was a tailor by trade, who belonged to the playhouse, and had the character of a mild and peaceable man in his profession. If the former was too furious, this was too sheepish for his part; insomuch that, after a short modest walk upon the stage, he would fall at the first touch of Hydaspes, without grappling with him, and giving him an opportunity of shewing his variety of Italian trips. It is said, indeed, that he once gave him a rip in his flesh-coloured doublet; but this was only to make work for himself, in his private character of a tailor. . . . The acting lion at present is as I am informed, a country gentleman, who does it for his diversion, but desires his name may be concealed. He says, very handsomely, in his own excuse, that he does not act for gain, that he indulges an innocent pleasure in it; and that it is better to pass away an evening in this manner than in gaming and drinking. . . . This gentleman's temper is made out of such a happy mixture of the mild and the choleric, that he outdoes both his predecessors, and has drawn together greater audiences than have been known in the memory of man. . . . In the meantime I have related this combat of the lion, to show what are at present the reigning entertainments of the politer part of Great Britain." [3]

There is much originality in this grave gayety. As a rule, singularity is in accordance with the taste of the nation; they

[3] "Spectator," No. 13.

like to be impressed strongly by contrasts. French literature seems to them threadbare; and the French find them often not very delicate. A number of the "Spectator" which seemed pleasant to London ladies would have shocked people in Paris. Thus, Addison relates in the form of a dream the dissection of a beau's brain:

"The pineal gland, which many of our modern philosophers suppose to be the seat of the soul, smelt very strongly of essence and orange-flower water, and was encompassed with a kind of horny substance, cut into a thousand little faces or mirrors, which were imperceptible to the naked eye: insomuch that the soul, if there had been any here, must have been always taken up in contemplating her own beauties. We observed a large antrim or cavity in the sinciput, that was filled with ribbons, lace, and embroidery. . . . We did not find anything very remarkable in the eye, saving only, that the *musculi amatorii*, or, as we may translate it into English, the ogling muscles, were very much worn, and decayed with use; whereas on the contrary, the elevator, or the muscle which turns the eye towards heaven, did not appear to have been used at all." [4]

These anatomical details, which would disgust the French, amuse a matter-of-fact mind; harshness is for him only accuracy; accustomed to precise images, he finds no objectionable odor in the medical style. Addison does not share our repugnance. To rail at a vice, he becomes a mathematician, an economist, a pedant, an apothecary. Technical terms amuse him. He sets up a court to judge crinolines, and condemns petticoats in legal formulas. He teaches how to handle a fan as if he were teaching to prime and load muskets. He draws up a list of men dead or injured by love, and the ridiculous causes which have reduced them to such a condition:

"Will Simple, smitten at the Opera by the glance of an eye that was aimed at one who stood by him.

"Sir Christopher Crazy, Bart., hurt by the brush of a whalebone petticoat.

"Ned Courtly, presenting Flavia with her glove (which she had dropped on purpose), she received it and took away his life with a curtsey.

"John Gosselin, having received a slight hurt from a pair of blue eyes, as he was making his escape, was dispatched by a smile." [5]

[4] "Spectator," No. 275. [5] Ibid. No. 377.

Other statistics, with recapitulations and tables of numbers, relate the history of the Leucadian leap:

"Aridæus a beautiful youth of Epirus, in love with Praxinoe, the wife of the Thespis, escaped without damage, saving only that two of his fore teeth were struck out, and his nose a little flatted.

"Hipparchus, being passionately fond of his own wife, who was enamoured of Bathyllus, leaped and died of his fall; upon which his wife married her gallant." [6]

We see this strange mode of painting human folly: in England it is called humor. It consists of an incisive good sense, the habit of restraint, business habits, but above all a fundamental energy of invention. The race is less refined, but stronger than the French; and the pleasures which content its mind and taste are like the liquors which suit its palate and its stomach.

This potent Germanic spirit breaks out even in Addison through his classical and Latin exterior. Albeit he relishes art, he still loves nature. His education, which loaded him with maxims, has not destroyed his virgin sentiment of truth. In his travels in France he preferred the wildness of Fontainebleau to the correctness of Versailles. He shakes off worldly refinement to praise the simplicity of the old national ballads. He explains to his public the sublime images, the vast passions, the deep religon of "Paradise Lost." It is curious to see him, compass in hand, kept back by Bossu, fettered in endless arguments and academical phrases, attaining with one spring, through the strength of natural emotion, the lofty unexplored regions to which Milton rose by the inspiration of faith and genius. Addison does not say, as Voltaire does, that the allegory of Sin and Death is enough to make people sick. He has a foundation of grand imagination, which makes him indifferent to the little refinements of social civilization. He sojourns willingly amid the grandeur and marvels of the other world. He is penetrated by the presence of the Invisible, he must escape from the interests and hopes of the petty life in which we crawl.[7] This source of faith gushes from him in all directions; in vain is it enclosed in the regular channel of official dogma; the text and arguments with which it is covered

[6] "Spectator," No. 233.
[7] See the last thirty numbers of the "Spectator."

do not hide its true origin. It springs from the grave and fertile imagination which can only be satisfied with a sight of what is beyond.

Such a faculty swallows a man up; and if we descend to the examination of literary qualities, we find it at the bottom as well as at the top. Nothing in Addison is more varied and rich than the changes and the scenery. The driest morality is transformed under his hand into pictures and stories. There are letters from all kinds of men, clergymen, common people, men of fashion, who keep their own style, and disguise their advice under the form of a little novel. An ambassador from Bantam jests, like Montesquieu, at the lies of European politeness. Greek or Oriental tales, imaginary travels, the vision of a Scottish seer, the memoirs of a rebel, the history of ants, the transformations of an ape, the journal of an idle man, a walk in Westminster, the genealogy of humor, the laws of ridiculous clubs; in short, an inexhaustible mass of pleasant or solid fictions. The allegories are most frequent. We feel that the author delights in their magnificent and fantastic world; he is acting for himself a sort of opera; his eyes must look on colors. Here is a paper on religions, very Protestant, but as sparkling as it is ingenious: relaxation in England does not consist, as in France, in the vivacity and variety of tone, but in the splendor and correctness of invention:

"The middle figure, which immediately attracted the eyes of the whole company, and was much bigger than the rest, was formed like a matron, dressed in the habit of an elderly woman of quality in Queen Elizabeth's days. The most remarkable parts of her dress were the beaver with the steeple crown, the scarf that was darker than sable, and the lawn apron that was whiter than ermine. Her gown was of the richest black velvet, and just upon her heart studded with large diamonds of an inestimable value, disposed in the form of a cross. She bore an inexpressible cheerfulness and dignity in her aspect; and though she seemed in years, appeared with so much spirit and vivacity, as gave her at the same time an air of old age and immortality. I found my heart touched with so much love and reverence at the sight of her, that the tears ran down my face as I looked upon her; and still the more I looked upon her, the more my heart was melted with the sentiments of filial tenderness and duty. I discovered every moment something so charming in this figure, that I could scarce take my eyes off it. On its right hand there sat the figure of a woman so covered with ornaments, that her face, her body, and her hands were almost entirely hid under them. The little you could see of her face was

painted, and what I thought very odd, had something in it like artificial wrinkles; but I was the less surprised at it, when I saw upon her forehead an old-fashioned tower of grey hairs. Her head-dress rose very high by three several stories or degrees; her garments had a thousand colours in them, and were embroidered with crosses in gold, silver, and silk; she had nothing on, so much as a glove or a slipper, which was not marked with this figure; nay, so superstitiously fond did she appear of it, that she sat cross-legged. . . . The next to her was a figure which somewhat puzzled me; it was that of a man looking with horror in his eyes, upon a silver bason filled with water. Observing something in his countenance that looked like lunacy, I fancied at first that he was to express that kind of distraction which the physicians call the Hydrophobia; but considering what the intention of the show was, I immediately recollected myself, and concluded it to be Anabaptism." [8]

The reader must guess what these two first figures mean. They will please a member of the Episcopal Church more than a Roman Catholic; but I think that a Roman Catholic himself cannot help recognizing the fulness and freshness of the fiction.

Genuine imagination naturally ends in the invention of characters. For, if we clearly represent to ourselves a situation or an action, we will see at the same time the whole network of its connection; the passion and faculties, all the gestures and tones of voice, all details of dress, dwelling, social intercourse, which flow from it, will be connected in our mind, and bring their precedents and their consequences; and this multitude of ideas, slowly organized, will at last be concentrated in a single sentiment, from which, as from a deep spring, will break forth the portrait and the history of a complete character. There are several such in Addison; the quiet observer Will Honeycomb, the country Tory Sir Roger de Coverley, which are not satirical theses, like those of La Bruyère, but genuine individuals, like, and sometimes equal to, the characters of the great contemporary novels. In reality, he invents the novel without suspecting it, at the same time and in the same way as his most illustrious neighbors. His characters are taken from life, from the manners and conditions of the age, described at length and minutely in all the details of their education and surroundings, with a precise and positive observation, marvellously real and English. A masterpiece as well as an histori-

[8] "Tatler," No. 257.

cal record is Sir Roger de Coverley, the country gentleman, a loyal servant of State and Church, a justice of the peace, with a chaplain of his own, and whose estate shows on a small scale the structure of the English nation. This domain is a little kingdom, paternally governed, but still governed. Sir Roger rates his tenants, passes them in review in church, knows their affairs, gives them advice, assistance, commands; he is respected, obeyed, loved, because he lives with them, because the simplicity of his tastes and education puts him almost on a level with them; because as a magistrate, a landed proprietor of many years' standing, a wealthy man, a benefactor and neighbor, he exercises a moral and legal, a useful and respected authority. Addison at the same time shows in him the solid and peculiar English character, built of heart of oak, with all the ruggedness of the primitive bark, which can neither be softened nor planed down, a great fund of kindness which extends even to animals, a love for the country and for bodily exercises, an inclination to command and discipline, a feeling of subordination and respect, much common-sense and little *finesse,* a habit of displaying and practising in public his singularities and oddities, careless of ridicule, without thought of bravado, solely because these men acknowledge no judge but themselves. A hundred traits depict the times; a lack of love for reading, a lingering belief in witches, rustic and sporting manners, the ignorances of an artless or backward mind. Sir Roger gives the children, who answer their catechism well, a Bible for themselves, and half a flitch of bacon for their mothers. When a verse pleases him, he sings it for half a minute after the congregation has finished. He kills eight fat pigs at Christmas, and sends a pudding and a pack of cards to each poor family in the parish. When he goes to the theatre, he supplies his servants with cudgels to protect themselves from the thieves which, he says, infest London. Addison returns a score of times to the old knight, always showing some new aspect of his character, a disinterested observer of humanity, curiously assiduous and discerning, a true creator, having but one step farther to go to enter, like Richardson and Fielding, upon the great work of modern literature, the novel of manners and customs.

There is an undercurrent of poetry in all this. It has flowed

through his prose a thousand times more sincere and beautiful than in his verses. Rich oriental fancies are displayed, not with a shower of sparks as in Voltaire, but in a calm and abundant light, which makes the regular folds of their purple and gold undulate.[9] The music of the vast cadenced and tranquil phrases leads the mind gently amidst romantic splendors and enchantments, and the deep sentiment of ever young nature recalls the happy quietude of Spenser. Through gentle railleries or moral essays we feel that the author's imagination is happy, delighted in the contemplation of the swaying to and fro of the forest-tops which clothe the mountains, the eternal verdure of the valleys, invigorated by fresh springs, and the wide view undulating far away on the distant horizon. Great and simple sentiments naturally join these noble images, and their measured harmony creates a unique spectacle, worthy to fascinate the heart of a good man by its gravity and sweetness. Such are the visions of Mirza, which I will give almost entire:

"On the fifth day of the moon, which according to the custom of my forefathers I always keep holy, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hills of Bagdad, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer. As I was here airing myself on the tops of the mountains, I fell into a profound contemplation of the vanity of human life; and passing from one thought to another: Surely, said I, man is but a shadow and life a dream. Whilst I was thus musing, I cast my eyes towards the summit of a rock that was not far from me, where I discovered one in the habit of a shepherd, with a musical instrument in his hand. As I looked upon him he applied it to his lips, and began to play upon it. The sound of it was exceeding sweet, and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious, and altogether different from anything I had ever heard. They put me in mind of those heavenly airs that are played to the departed souls of good men upon their first arrival in Paradise, to wear out the impressions of the last agonies, and qualify them for the pleasures of that happy place. My heart melted away in secret raptures. . . .

"He (the Genius) then led me to the highest pinnacle of the rock, and placing me on the top of it, Cast thy eyes eastward, said he, and tell me what thou seest. I see, said I, a huge valley, and a prodigious tide of water rolling through it. The valley that thou seest, said he, is the vale of misery, and the tide of water that thou seest is part of the great tide of Eternity. What is the reason, said I, that the tide I see rises out of a thick mist at one end, and again loses itself in a thick mist at the other? What thou seest, said he, is that portion of Eternity which is called Time, measured out by the Sun, and reaching from the

[9] See the history of Alnaschar in the "Spectator," No. 535, and also that of Hilpa in the same paper, Nos. 584, 585.

beginning of the world to its consummation. Examine now, said he, this sea that is bounded with darkness at both ends, and tell me what thou discoverest in it. I see a bridge, said I, standing in the midst of the tide. The bridge thou seest, said he, is human life; consider it attentively. Upon a more leisurely survey of it, I found that it consisted of three score and ten entire arches, with several broken arches, which added to those that were entire, made up the number about an hundred. As I was counting the arches, the genius told me that this bridge consisted at first of a thousand arches; but that a great flood swept away the rest, and left the bridge in the ruinous condition I now beheld it. But tell me further, said he, what thou discoverest on it. I see multitudes of people passing over it, said I, and a black cloud hanging on each end of it. As I looked more attentively, I saw several of the passengers dropping through the bridge into the great tide that flowed underneath it; and upon further examination, perceived there were innumerable trap-doors that lay concealed in the bridge, which the passengers no sooner trod upon, but they fell through them into the tide, and immediately disappeared. These hidden pit-falls were set very thick at the entrance of the bridge, so that throngs of people no sooner broke through the cloud, but many of them fell into them. They grew thinner towards the middle, but multiplied and lay closer together towards the end of the arches that were entire.

"There were indeed some persons, but their number was very small, that continued a kind of hobbling march on the broken arches, but fell through one after another, being quite tired and spent with so long a walk.

"I passed some time in the contemplation of this wonderful structure, and the great variety of objects which it presented. My heart was filled with a deep melancholy to see several dropping unexpectedly in the midst of mirth and jollity, and catching at everything that stood by them to save themselves. Some were looking up towards the Heavens in a thoughtful posture, and in the midst of a Speculation stumbled and fell out of sight. Multitudes were very busy in the pursuit of bubbles that glittered in their eyes and danced before them; but often when they thought themselves within the reach of them, their footing failed and down they sunk. In this confusion of objects, I observed some with scimitars in their hands, and others with urinals, who ran to and fro upon the bridge, thrusting several persons on trap-doors which did not seem to lie in their way, and which they might have escaped had they not been thus forced upon them. . . .

"I here fetched a deep sigh. Alas, said I, man was made in vain! How is he given away to misery and mortality! tortured in life, and swallowed up in death! The Genius, being moved with compassion towards me, bid me quit so uncomfortable a prospect. Look no more, said he, on man in the first stage of his existence, in his setting out for eternity; but cast thine eye on that thick mist into which the tide bears the several generations of mortals that fall into it. I directed my sight as I was ordered, and (whether or no the good Genius strengthened it with any supernatural force, or dissipated part of the mist that was

before too thick for the eye to penetrate) I saw the valley opening at the farther end, and spreading forth into an immense ocean, that had a huge rock of adamant running through the midst of it, and dividing it into two equal parts. The clouds still rested on one half of it, insomuch that I could discover nothing in it: but the other appeared to me a vast ocean planted with innumerable islands, that were covered with fruits and flowers, and interwoven with a thousand little shining seas that ran among them. I could see persons dressed in glorious habits, with garlands upon their heads, passing among the trees, lying down by the sides of the fountains, or resting on beds of flowers; and could hear a confused harmony of singing birds, falling waters, human voices, and musical instruments. Gladness grew in me upon the discovery of so delightful a scene. I wished for the wings of an eagle, that I might fly away to those happy seas; but the Genius told me there was no passage to them, except through the gates of death that I saw opening every moment upon the bridge. The islands, said he, that lie so fresh and green before thee, and with which the whole face of the ocean appears spotted as far as thou canst see, are more in number than the sands on the sea-shore; there are myriads of islands behind those which thou here discoverest, reaching farther than thine eye, or even thine imagination, can extend itself. These are the mansions of good men after death, who according to the degree and kinds of virtue in which they excelled, are distributed among these several islands, which abound with pleasures of different kinds and degrees, suitable to the relishes and perfections of those who are settled in them: every island is a paradise accommodated to its respective inhabitants. Are not these, O Mirza, habitations worth contending for? Does life appear miserable, that gives thee opportunities of earning such a reward? Is death to be feared, that will convey thee to so happy an existence? Think not man was made in vain, who has such an eternity reserved for him. I gazed with inexpressible pleasure on these happy islands. At length, said I, shew me now, I beseech thee, the secrets that lie hid under those dark clouds which cover the ocean on the other side of the rock of Adamant. The Genius making me no answer, I turned me about to address myself to him a second time, but I found that he had left me: I then turned again to the vision which I had been so long contemplating: but instead of the rolling tide, the arched bridge, and the happy islands, I saw nothing but the long hollow valley of Bagdad, with oxen, sheep, and camels grazing upon the sides of it." [10]

In this ornate moral sketch, this fine reasoning, so correct and so eloquent, this ingenious and noble imagination, I find an epitome of all Addison's characteristics. These are the English tints which distinguish this classical age from that of the French: a narrower and more practical argument, a more poetical and less eloquent urbanity, a structure of mind more inventive and more rich, less sociable and less refined.

[10] "Spectator," No. 159.

CHAPTER FIFTH

SWIFT

IN 1685, in the great hall of Dublin University, the professors engaged in examining for the bachelor's degree beheld a singular spectacle: a poor scholar, odd, awkward, with hard blue eyes, an orphan, friendless, dependent on the precarious charity of an uncle, having failed once before to take his degree on account of his ignorance of logic, had come up again without having condescended to read logic. To no purpose his tutor set before him the most respectable folios—Smiglecius, Keckermannus, Burgerdiscius. He turned over a few pages, and shut them directly. When the argumentation came on, the proctor was obliged to "reduce his replies into syllogism." He was asked how he could reason well without rules; he replied that he did reason pretty well without them. This folly shocked them; yet he was received, though with some difficulty, *speciali gratiâ*, says the college register, and the professors went away, doubtless with pitying smiles, lamenting the feeble brain of Jonathan Swift.

Section I.—Concerning Swift's Life and Character

This was his first humiliation and his first rebellion. His whole life was like this moment, overwhelmed and made wretched by sorrow and hatred. To what excess they rose, his portrait and his history alone can show. He fostered an exaggerated and terrible pride, and made the haughtiness of the most powerful ministers and greatest lords bend beneath his arrogance. Though only a literary man, possessing nothing but a small Irish living, he treated them on a footing of equality. Harley, the Prime Minister, having sent him a bank-bill of fifty pounds for his first articles, he was offended at

being taken for a hack writer, return d the money, demanded an apology, received it, and wrote in his journal: "I have taken Mr. Harley into favour again." [1] On another occasion, having observed that the Secretary of State, St. John, looked upon him coldly, he rebuked him for it:

"One thing I warned him of, never to appear cold to me, for I would not be treated like a school-boy; that I expected every great minister who honoured me with his acquaintance, if he heard or saw anything to my disadvantage, would let me know in plain words, and not put me in pain to guess by the change or coldness of his countenance or behaviour; for it was what I would hardly bear from a crowned head; and I thought no subject's favour was worth it: and that I designed to let my Lord Keeper and Mr. Harley know the same thing, that they might use me accordingly." [2]

St. John, approved of this, made excuses, said that he had passed several nights at "business, and one night at drinking," and that his fatigue might have seemed like ill-humor. In the minister's drawing-room Swift went up and spoke to some obscure person, and compelled the lords to come and speak to him:

"Mr. Secretary told me the Duke of Buckingham had been talking to him much about me, and desired my acquaintance. I answered, it could not be, for he had not made sufficient advances. Then the Duke of Shrewsbury said he thought the Duke was not used to make advances. I said I could not help that; for I always expected advances in proportion to men's quality, and more from a Duke than other men." [3]

"Saw Lord Halifax at court, and we joined and talked, and the Duchess of Shrewsbury came up and reproached me for not dining with her: I said that was not so soon done; for I expected more advances from ladies, especially duchesses: She promised to comply. . . . Lady Oglethorpe brought me and the Duchess of Hamilton together to-day in the drawing-room, and I have given her some encouragement, but not much." [4]

He triumphed in his arrogance, and said with a restrained joy, full of vengeance: "I generally am acquainted with about thirty in the drawing-room, and am so proud that I make all the lords come up to me. One passes half an hour pleasant

[1] In Swift's Works, ed. W. Scott, 19 vols. 1814; "Journal to Stella," ii. February 13 (1710-11). He says also (February 6 and 7): "I will not see him (Mr. Harley) till he makes amends. . . . I was deaf to all entreaties, and have desire." Lewis to go to him, and let him know that I expect farther satisfaction. If we let these great ministers pretend too much, there will be no governing them."

[2] Ibid. April 3, 1711.

[3] Ibid. May 19, 1711.

[4] Ibid. October 7, 1711.

enough." He carried his triumph to the verge of brutality and tyranny; writing to the Duchess of Queensberry, he says: "I am glad you know your duty; for it has been a known and established rule above twenty years in England, that the first advances have been constantly made me by all ladies who aspired to my acquaintance, and the greater their quality, the greater were their advances." [5] The famous General Webb, with his crutch and cane, limped up two flights of stairs to congratulate him and invite him to dinner; Swift accepted, then an hour later withdrew his consent, preferring to dine elsewhere. He seemed to look upon himself as a superior being, exempt from the necessity of showing his respects to anyone, entitled to homage, caring neither for sex, rank, nor fame, whose business it was to protect and destroy, distributing favors, insults, and pardons. Addison, and after him Lady Gifford, a friend of twenty years' standing, having offended him, he refused to take them back into his favor until they had asked his pardon. Lord Lansdowne, Secretary for War, being annoyed at an expression of the "Examiner," Swift says: "This I resented highly that he should complain of me before he spoke to me. I sent him a peppering letter, and would not summon him by a note, as I did the rest; nor ever will have anything to say to him, till he begs my pardon." [6] He treated art like man, writing a thing off, scorning the wretched necessity of reading it over, putting his name to nothing, letting every piece make its way on its own merits, unassisted, without the prestige of his name, recommended by none. He had the soul of a dictator, thirsting after power, and saying openly: "All my endeavors, from a boy, to distinguish myself were only for want of a great title and fortune, that I might be treated like a lord. . . . whether right or wrong, it is no great matter; and so the reputation of wit or great learning does the office of a blue ribbon, or of a coach and six horses." [7] But he thought this power and rank due to him; he did not ask, but expected them. "I will never beg for myself, though I often do it for others." He desired ruling power, and acted as if he had it. Hatred and misfortune find a congenial soil in these despotic minds. They live like fallen kings, always insulting and offended, having all the miseries but none of the

[5] "Journal to Stella," xvii. p. 352.
[6] Ibid. iii. March 27, 1711-12.
[7] Letter to Bolingbroke, Dublin, April 5, 1729.

consolations of pride, unable to relish either society or solitude, too ambitious to be content with silence, too haughty to use the world, born for rebellion and defeat, destined by their passions and impotence to despair and to talent.

Sensitiveness in Swift's case aggravated the stings of pride. Under this outward calmness of countenance and style raged furious passions. There was within him a ceaseless tempest of wrath and desire: "A person of great honour in Ireland (who was pleased to stoop so low as to look into my mind) used to tell me that my mind was like a conjured spirit, that would do mischief, if I would not give it employment." Resentment sunk deeper in him than in other men. Listen to the profound sigh of joyful hatred with which he sees his enemies under his feet: "The Whigs were ravished to see me, and would lay hold on me as a twig while they are drowning; and the great men making me their clumsy apologies." [8] "It is good to see what a lamentable confession the Whigs all make of my ill-usage." [9] And soon after: "Rot them, for ungrateful dogs; I will make them repent their usage before I leave this place." [10] He is satiated and has glutted his appetite; like a wolf or a lion, he cares for nothing else.

This impetuosity led him to every sort of madness and violence. His "Drapier's Letters" had roused Ireland against the government, and the government had issued a proclamation offering a reward to anyone who would denounce the Drapier. Swift came suddenly into the reception-chamber, elbowed the groups, went up to the lord-lieutenant, with indignation on his countenance, and in a thundering voice, said: "So, my lord, this is a glorious exploit that you performed yesterday, in suffering a proclamation against a poor shopkeeper, whose only crime is an honest endeavor to save his country from ruin." [11] And he broke out into railing amidst general silence and amazement. The lord-lieutenant, a man of sense, answered calmly. Before such a torrent men turned aside. This chaotic and self-devouring heart could not understand the calmness of his friends; he asked them: "Do not the corruptions and villanies of men eat your flesh, and exhaust your spirits?" [12]

Resignation was repulsive to him. His actions, abrupt and

[8] "Journal to Stella," ii. September 9, 1710.
[9] Ibid. September 30, 1710.
[10] Ibid. November 8, 1710.
[11] "Swift's Life," by Roscoe, i. 56.
[12] "Swift's Life," by W. Scott, i. 379.

strange, broke out amidst his silent moods like flashes of lightning. He was eccentric and violent in everything, in his pleasantry, in his private affairs, with his friends, with unknown people; he was often taken for a madman. Addison and his friends had seen for several days at Button's coffee-house a singular parson, who laid his hat on the table, walked for half-an-hour backward and forward, paid his money, and left, having attended to nothing and said nothing. They called him the mad parson. One day this parson perceives a gentleman "just come out of the country," went straight up to him, "and in a very abrupt manner, without any previous salute, asked him, 'Pray sir, do you remember any good weather in the world?' The country gentleman, after staring a little at the singularity of his (Swift's) manner and the oddity of the question, answered, 'Yes, sir, I thank God, I remember a great deal of good weather in my time.' 'That is more,' said Swift, 'than I can say; I never remember any weather that was not too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry; but, however, God Almighty contrives it, at the end of the year 'tis all very well.'" [13] Another day, dining with the Earl of Burlington, the Dean said to the mistress of the house, "Lady Burlington, I hear you can sing; sing me a song." The lady looked on this unceremonious manner of asking a favor with distaste, and positively refused. He said, "she should sing, or he would make her. Why, madam, I suppose you take me for one of your poor English hedge-parsons; sing when I bid you!" As the earl did nothing but laugh at this freedom, the lady was so vexed that she burst into tears, and retired. His first compliment to her, when he saw her again, was, "Pray, madam, are you as proud and as ill-natured now as when I saw you last?" [14] People were astonished or amused at these outbursts; I see in them sobs and cries, the explosion of long, overwhelming and bitter thoughts; they are the starts of a mind unsubdued, shuddering, rebelling, breaking the barriers, wounding, crushing, or bruising everyone on its road, or those who wish to stop it. Swift became mad at last; he felt this madness coming on, he has described it in a horrible manner; beforehand he has tasted all the disgust and bitterness of it; he showed it on his tragic face, in his terrible and wan eyes. This is the powerful and

[13] Sheridan's "Life of Swift." [14] W. Scott's "Life of Swift," i. 477.

mournful genius which nature gave up as a prey to society and life; society and life poured all their poisons into him.

He knew what poverty and scorn were, even at that age when the mind expands, when the heart is full of pride,[15] when he was hardly maintained by the alms of his family, gloomy and without hope, feeling his strength and the dangers of his strength.[16] At twenty-one, as secretary to Sir William Temple, he had twenty pounds a year salary, sat at the same table with the upper servants,[17] wrote Pindaric odes in honor of his master, spent ten years amidst the humiliations of servitude and the familiarity of the servants' hall, obliged to adulate a gouty and flattered courtier, to submit to my lady his sister, acutely pained "when Sir William Temple would look cold and out of humor," [18] lured by false hopes, forced after an attempt at independence to resume the livery which was choking him. "When you find years coming on, without hopes of a place at court, . . . I directly advise you to go upon the road, which is the only post of honour left you; there you will meet many of your old comrades, and live a short life and a merry one." [19] This is followed by instructions as to the conduct servants ought to display when led to the gallows. Such are his "Directions to Servants"; he was relating what he had suffered. At the age of thirty-one, expecting a place from William III, he edited the works of his patron, dedicating them to the sovereign, sent him a memorial, got nothing, and fell back upon the post of chaplain and private secretary to the Earl of Berkeley. He soon remained only chaplain to that nobleman, feeling all the disgust which the part of ecclesiastical valet must inspire in a man of feeling.

[15] At that time he had already begun the "Tale of a Tub."

[16] He addresses his muse thus, in "Verses occasioned by Sir William Temple's late illness and recovery," xiv. 45:

"Wert thou right woman, thou should'st scorn to look
On an abandoned wretch by hopes forsook;
Forsook by hopes, ill fortune's last relief,
Assign'd for life to unremitting grief;

"To thee I owe that fatal bent of mind
Still to unhappy restless thoughts inclined;
To thee, what oft I vainly strive to hide.
That scorn of fools, by fools mistook for pride."

[17] These assertions have been denied. See Roscoe's "Life of Swift," i. 14.—Tr.

[18] "Don't you remember how I used to be in pain when Sir William Temple would look cold and out of humour for three or four days, and I used to suspect a hundred reasons? I have plucked up my spirit since then, faith; he spoiled a fine gentleman."—"Journal to Stella," April 4, 1710-11.

[19] "Directions to Servants," xii. ch. iii. 434.

Says the chambermaid in the well-known "Petition":

> "You know I honour the cloth; I design to be a parson's wife. . . .
> And over and above, that I may have your excellency's letter
> With an order for the chaplain aforesaid, or instead of him a better." [20]

The earl, having promised him the deanery of Derry, gave it to another. Driven to politics, he wrote a Whig pamphlet, "A Discourse on the Contests and Dissensions in Athens and Rome," received from Lord Halifax and the party leaders a score of fine promises, and was neglected. Twenty years of insults without revenge, and humiliations without respite; the inner tempest of fostered and crushed hopes, vivid and brilliant dreams, suddenly withered by the necessity of a mechanical duty; the habit of suffering and hatred, the necessity of concealing these, the baneful consciousness of superiority, the isolation of genius and pride, the bitterness of accumulated wrath and pent-up scorn—these were the goads which pricked him like a bull. More than a thousand pamphlets in four years, stung him still more, with such designations as renegade, traitor, and atheist. He crushed them all, set his foot on the Whig party, solaced himself with the poignant pleasure of victory. If ever a soul was satiated with the joy of tearing, outraging, and destroying, it was his. Excess of scorn, implacable irony, crushing logic, the cruel smile of the foeman, who sees beforehand the spot where he will wound his enemy mortally, advances towards him, tortures him deliberately, eagerly, with enjoyment—such were the feelings which had leavened him, and which broke from him with such harshness that he hindered his own career; [21] and that of so many high places for which he stretched out his hands, there remained for him only a deanery in poor Ireland. The accession of George I exiled him thither; the accession of George II, on which he had counted, confined him there. He contended there first against popular hatred, then against the victorious minister, then against entire humanity, in sanguinary pamphlets, despairing satires; [22] he tasted there once more the pleasure of fighting and wounding; he suffered there to the end, soured by the advance of years, by the spectacle of oppression and misery, by

[20] "Mrs. Harris's Petition," xiv. 52.

[21] By the "Tale of a Tub" with the clergy, and by the "Prophecy of Windsor" with the Queen.

[22] "The Drapier's Letters," "Gulliver's Travels," "Rhapsody on Poetry," "A modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of poor People in Ireland from being a Burden to their Parents or Country, and for Making them beneficial to the Public," and several pamphlets on Ireland.

the feeling of his own impotence, enraged to have to live amongst "an enslaved people," chained and vanquished. He says: "I find myself disposed every year, or rather every month, to be more angry and revengeful; and my rage is so ignoble, that it descends even to resent the folly and baseness of the enslaved people among whom I live." [23] This cry is the epitome of his public life; these feelings are the materials which public life furnished to his talent.

He experienced these feelings also in private life, more violent and more inwardly. He had brought up and purely loved a charming, well-informed, modest young girl, Esther Johnson, who from infancy had loved and reverenced him alone. She lived with him, he had made her his confidante. From London, during his political struggles, he sent her the full journal of his slightest actions; he wrote to her twice a day, with extreme ease and familiarity, with all the playfulness, vivacity, petting and caressing names of the tenderest attachment. Yet another girl, beautiful and rich, Miss Vanhomrigh, attached herself to him, declared her passion, received from him several marks of his own, followed him to Ireland, sometimes jealous, sometimes submissive, but so impassioned, so unhappy, that her letters might have broken a harder heart: "If you continue to treat me as you do, you will not be made uneasy by me long. . . . I am sure I could have borne the rack much better, than those killing, killing words of you. . . . Oh, that you may have but so much regard for me left, that this complaint may touch your soul with pity!" [24] She pined and died. Esther Johnson, who had so long possessed Swift's whole heart, suffered still more. All was changed in Swift's house. "At my first coming (at Laracor) I thought I should have died with discontent, and was horribly melancholy while they were installing me." [25] He found tears, distrust, resentment, cold silence, in place of familiarity and tenderness. He married Miss Johnson from a feeling of duty, but in secret, and on condition that she should only be his wife in name. She was twelve years dying; Swift went away to England as often as he could. His house was a hell to him; it is thought that some secret physical cause had influenced his

[23] Letter to Lord Bolingbroke, Dublin, March 21, 1728, xviii. 371.

[24] Letter of Miss Vanhomrigh, Dublin, 1714, xix. 421.

[25] These words are taken from a letter of Miss Vanhomrigh, July 8, 1713, and cannot refer to her death, which took place in 1721.—Tr.

loves and his marriage. Delany, his biographer, having once found him talking with Archbishop King, saw the archbishop in tears, and Swift rushing by, with a countenance full of grief, and a distracted air. "Sir," said the prelate, "you have just met the most unhappy man upon earth; but on the subject of his wretchedness you must never ask a question." Esther Johnson died. Swift's anguish, the spectres by which he was haunted, the remembrance of the two women, slowly ruined and killed by his fault, continually encompassed him with such horrors, that only his end reveals them. "It is time for me to have done with the world . . . and so I would . . . and not die here in a rage, like a poisoned rat in a hole." [26] Overwork and excess of emotion had made him ill from his youth; he was subject to giddiness; he lost his hearing. He had long felt that reason was deserting him. One day he was observed "gazing intently at the top of a lofty elm, the head of which had been blasted. Upon his friend's approach, he pointed to it, significantly adding, 'I shall be like that tree, and die first at the top.'" [27] His memory left him; he received the attentions of others with disgust, sometimes with rage. He lived alone, gloomy, unable to read. It is said that he passed a whole year without uttering a word, hating the sight of a human being, walking ten hours a day, a maniac, then an idiot. A tumor came on one of his eyes, so that he continued a month without sleeping, and five men were needed to prevent his tearing out the eye with his nails. One of his last words was, "I am a fool." When his will was opened, it was found that he had left his whole fortune to build a madhouse.

Section II.—Swift's Prosaic and Positive Mind

These passions and these miseries were necessary to inspire "Gulliver's Travels" and the "Tale of a Tub."

A strange and powerful form of mind, too, was necessary, as English as his pride and his passions. Swift has the style of a surgeon and a judge, cold, grave, solid, unadorned, without vivacity or passion, manly and practical. He desired neither to please, nor to divert, nor to carry people away, nor to move the feelings; he never hesitated, nor was redundant, nor was excited,

[26] Letter to Bolingbroke, Dublin, March 21, 1728, xvii. 276.

[27] Roscoe's "Life of Swift," i. 80.

nor made an effort. He expressed his thoughts in a uniform tone, with exact, precise, often harsh terms, with familiar comparisons, levelling all within reach of his hand, even the loftiest things—especially the loftiest—with a brutal and always haughty coolness. He knows life as a banker knows accounts; and his total once made up, he scorns or knocks down the babblers who dispute it in his presence.

He knows the items as well as the sum total. He not only familiarly and vigorously seized on every object, but he also decomposed it, and kept an inventory of its details. His imagination was as minute as it was energetic. He could give you a statement of dry facts on every event and object, so connected and natural as to deceive any man. "Gulliver's Travels" read like a log-book. Isaac Bickerstaff's predictions were taken literally by the inquisition in Portugal. His account of M. du Baudrier seems an authentic translation. He gives to an extravagant romance the air of a genuine history. By this thorough knowledge of details he imports into literature the positive spirit of men of business and experience. Nothing could be more vigorous, narrow, unhappy, for nothing could be more destructive. No greatness, false or true, can stand before him; whatsoever he fathoms and takes in hand loses at once its prestige and value. Whilst he decomposes he displays the real ugliness, and removes the fictitious beauty of objects. Whilst he brings them to the level of common things, he suppresses their real beauty, and gives them a fictitious ugliness. He presents all their gross features, and nothing but their gross features. Look with him into the physical details of science, religion, state, and with him reduce science, religion, state, to the low standing of every-day events; with him you will see here a Bedlam of shrivelled-up dreamers, narrow and chimerical brains, busy in contradicting each other, picking up meaningless phrases in mouldy books, inventing conjectures, and crying them up for truth; there, a band of enthusiasts, mumbling phrases which they do not understand, adoring figures of rhetoric as mysteries, attaching ideas of holiness or impiety to lawn-sleeves or postures, spending in persecutions or genuflexions the surplus of sheepish or ferocious folly with which an evil fate has crammed their brains; there, again, flocks of idiots pouring out their blood and treasure for the whims or plots of a carriage-drawn aristocrat, out of re-

spect for the carriage which they themselves have given him. What part of human nature or existence can continue great and beautiful, before a mind which, penetrating all details, perceives men eating, sleeping, dressing, in all mean and low actions, degrading everything to the level of vulgar events, trivial circumstances of dress and cookery? It is not enough for the positive mind to see the springs, pulleys, lamps, and whatever there is objectionable in the opera at which he is present; he makes it more objectionable by calling it a show. It is not enough not to ignore anything; we must also refuse to admire. He treats things like domestic utensils; after reckoning up their materials, he gives them a vile name. Nature for him is but a caldron, and he knows the proportion and number of the ingredients simmering in it. In this power and this weakness we see beforehand the misanthropy and the talent of Swift.

There are, indeed, but two modes of agreeing with the world: mediocrity of mind and superiority of intelligence—the one for the public and the fools, the other for artists and philosophers: the one consists in seeing nothing, the other in seeing all. We will respect the respectable, if we see only the surface—if we take them as they are, if we let ourselves be duped by the fine show which they never fail to present. We will revere the gold-embroidered garments with which our masters bedizen themselves, and we will never dream of examining the stains hidden under the embroidery. We will be moved by the big words which they pronounce in a sublime voice, and we will never see in their pockets the hereditary phrase-book from which they have taken them. We will punctiliously bring them our money and our services; the custom will seem to us just, and we will accept the goose-dogma, that a goose is bound to be roasted. But, on the other hand, we will tolerate and even love the world, if, penetrating to its nature, we take the trouble to explain or imitate its mechanism. We will be interested in passions by an artist's sympathy or a philosopher's comprehension; we will find them natural whilst admitting their force, or we will find them necessary whilst computing their connection; we will cease to be indignant against the powers which produce fine spectacles, or will cease to be roused by the rebounds which the law of cause and effect had foretold. We will admire the world as a grand drama, or as an invincible development; and we will be

Now see how a mass of examples make a gratuitous assertion probable:

"Your Newsletter says that an assay was made of the coin. How impudent and insupportable is this! Wood takes care to coin a dozen or two halfpence of good metal, sends them to the Tower, and they are approved; and these must answer all that he has already coined, or shall coin for the future. It is true, indeed, that a gentleman often sends to my shop for a pattern of stuff; I cut it fairly off, and if he likes it, he comes or sends and compares the pattern with the whole piece, and probably we come to a bargain. But if I were to buy a hundred sheep, and the grazier should bring me one single wether, fat and well fleeced, by way of pattern, and expect the same price round for the whole hundred, without suffering me to see them before he was paid, or giving me good security to restore my money for those that were lean, or shorn, or scabby, I would be none of his customer. I have heard of a man who had a mind to sell his house, and therefore carried a piece of brick in his pocket, which he showed as a pattern to encourage purchasers; and this is directly the case in point with Mr. Wood's assay." [5]

A burst of laughter follows; butchers and bricklayers were gained over. As a finish, Swift showed them a practical expedient, suited to their understanding and their rank in life:

"The common soldier, when he goes to the market or ale-house, will offer his money; and if it be refused, perhaps he will swagger and hector, and threaten to beat the butcher or alewife, or take the goods by force, and throw them the bad halfpence. In this and the like cases, the shopkeeper or victualler, or any other tradesman, has no more to do than to demand ten times the price of his goods, if it is to be paid in Wood's money; for example, twenty-pence of that money for a quart of ale, and so in all things else, and never part with his goods till he gets the money." [6]

Public clamor overcame the English government; they withdrew the money and paid Wood a large indemnity. Such is the merit of Swift's arguments; good tools, trenchant and handy, neither elegant nor bright, but whose value is proved by their effect.

The whole beauty of these pamphlets is in their tone. They have neither the generous fire of Pascal, nor the bewildering gayety of Beaumarchais, nor the chiselled delicacy of Paul Louis Courier, but an overwhelming air of superiority and a bitter and terrible rancor. Vast passion and pride, like the positive

[5] "Drapier's Letters," vii.; Letter 2, 114. [6] Ibid. vii.; Letter 1, 101.

" Drapier's " mind just now described, have given all the blows their force. We should read his " Public Spirit of the Whigs," against Steele. Page by page Steele is torn to pieces with a calmness and scorn never equalled. Swift approaches regularly, leaving no part untouched, heaping wound on wound, every blow sure, knowing beforehand their reach and depth. Poor Steele, a vain, thoughtless fellow, is in his hands like Gulliver amongst the giants; it is a pity to see a contest so unequal; and this contest is pitiless. Swift crushes him carefully and easily, like an obnoxious animal. The unfortunate man, formerly an officer and a semi-literary man, had make awkward use of constitutional words:

" Upon this rock the author . . . is perpetually splitting, as often as he ventures out beyond the narrow bounds of his literature. He has a confused remembrance of words since he left the university, but has lost half their meaning, and puts them together with no regard, except to their cadence; as I remember, a fellow nailed up maps in a gentleman's closet, some sidelong, others upside down, the better to adjust them to the pannels." [7]

When he judges he is worse than when he proves; witness his " Short Character of Thomas Earl of Wharton." He pierces him with the formulas of official politeness; only an Englishman is capable of such phlegm and such haughtiness:

" I have had the honour of much conversation with his lordship, and am thoroughly convinced how indifferent he is to applause, and how insensible of reproach. . . . He is without the sense of shame, or glory, as some men are without the sense of smelling; and therefore, a good name to him is no more than a precious ointment would be to these. Whoever, for the sake of others, were to describe the nature of a serpent, a wolf, a crocodile or a fox, must be understood to do it without any personal love or hatred for the animals themselves. In the same manner his excellency is one whom I neither personally love nor hate. I see him at court, at his own house, and sometimes at mine, for I have the honour of his visits; and when these papers are public, it is odds but he will tell me, as he once did upon a like occasion, ' that he is damnably mauled,' and then, with the easiest transition in the world, ask about the weather, or time of the day; so that I enter on the work with more cheerfulness, because I am sure neither to make him angry, nor any way hurt his reputation; a pitch of happiness and security to which his excellency has arrived, and which no philosopher

[7] " The Public Spirit of the Whigs," iv. 405. See also in the " Examiner " the pamphlet against Marlborough under the name of Crassus, and the comparison between Roman generosity and English meanness.

before him could reach. Thomas, Earl of Wharton, lord-lieutenant of Ireland, by the force of a wonderful constitution, has some years passed his grand climacteric without any visible effects of old age, either on his body or his mind; and in spite of a continual prostitution to those vices which usually wear out both. . . . Whether he walks or whistles, or swears, or talks bawdy, or calls names, he acquits himself in each, beyond a templar of three years' standing. With the same grace, and in the same style, he will rattle his coachman in the midst of the street, where he is governor of the kingdom; and all this is without consequence, because it is in his character, and what everybody expects. . . . The ends he has gained by lying, appear to be more owing to the frequency, than the art of them; his lies being sometimes detected in an hour, often in a day, and always in a week. . . . He swears solemnly he loves and will serve you; and your back is no sooner turned, but he tells those about him, you are a dog and a rascal. He goes constantly to prayers in the forms of his place, and will talk bawdy and blasphemy at the chapel door. He is a presbyterian in politics, and an atheist in religion; but he chooses at present to whore with a papist. In his commerce with mankind, his general rule is, to endeavour to impose on their understandings, for which he has but one receipt, a composition of lies and oaths. . . . He bears the gallantries of his lady with the indifference of a stoick; and thinks them well recompensed, by a return of children to support his family, without the fatigues of being a father. . . . He was never yet known to refuse or keep a promise, as I remember he told a lady, but with an exception to the promise he then made (which was to get her a pension), yet he broke even that, and, I confess, deceived us both. But here I desire to distinguish between a promise and a bargain; for he will be sure to keep the latter, when he has the fairest offer. . . . But here I must desire the reader's pardon, if I cannot digest the following facts in so good a manner as I intended; because it is thought expedient, for some reasons, that the world should be informed of his excellency's merits as soon as possible. . . . As they are, they may serve for hints to any person who may hereafter have a mind to write memoirs of his excellency's life." [8]

Throughout this piece Swift's voice has remained calm: not a muscle of his face has moved; we perceive neither smile, flash of the eye, nor gesture; he speaks like a statue; but his anger grows by constraint, and burns the more that it shines the less.

This is why his ordinary style is grave irony. It is the weapon of pride, meditation, and force. The man who employs it is self-contained whilst a storm is raging within him; he is too proud to make a show of his passion; he does not take the public into his confidence; he elects to be solitary in his soul; he

[8] Swift's Works, iv. 148.

would be ashamed to confide in any man; he means and knows how to keep absolute possession of himself. Thus collected, he understands better and suffers more; no fit of passion relieves his wrath or draws away his attention; he feels all the points and penetrates to the depths of the opinion which he detests; he multiplies his pain and his knowledge, and spares himself neither wound nor reflection. We must see Swift in this attitude, impassive in appearance, but with stiffening muscles, a heart scorched with hatred, writing with a terrible smile such pamphlets as this:

"It may perhaps be neither safe nor prudent, to argue against the abolishing of Christianity, at a juncture, when all parties appear so unanimously determined upon the point. . . . However, I know not how, whether from the affectation of singularity, or the perverseness of human nature, but so it unhappily falls out, that I cannot be entirely of this opinion. Nay, though I were sure an order were issued for my immediate prosecution by the attorney-general, I should still confess, that in the present posture of our affairs, at home or abroad, I do not yet see the absolute necessity of extirpating the Christian religion from among us. This perhaps may appear too great a paradox, even for our wise and paradoxical age to endure; therefore I shall handle it with all tenderness, and with the utmost deference to that great and profound majority, which is of another sentiment. . . . I hope no reader imagines me so weak to stand up in the defence of real Christianity, such as used, in primitive times (if we may believe the authors of those ages), to have an influence upon men's belief and actions; to offer at the restoring of that, would indeed be a wild project; it would be to dig up foundations; to destroy at one blow all the wit, and half the learning of the kingdom. . . . Every candid reader will easily understand my discourse to be intended only in defence of nominal Christianity; the other having been for some time wholly laid aside by general consent, as utterly inconsistent with our present schemes of wealth and power." [9]

Let us then examine the advantages which this abolition of the title and name of Christian might have:

"It is likewise urged, that there are, by computation, in this kingdom above ten thousand parsons, whose revenues, added to those of my lords the bishops, would suffice to maintain at least two hundred young gentlemen of wit and pleasure, and free-thinking, enemies to priestcraft, narrow principles, pedantry, and prejudices, who might be an ornament to the court and town." [10]

[9] "An Argument to prove that the Abolishing of Christianity might be attended with some Inconveniences," viii. 184. The Whigs were herein attacked as the friends of freethinkers.

[10] Ibid. 188.

"It is likewise proposed as a great advantage to the public that if we once discard the system of the gospel, all religion will of course be banished for ever; and consequently along with it, those grievous prejudices of education, which under the names of virtue, conscience, honour, justice, and the like, are so apt to disturb the peace of human minds, and the notions whereof are so hard to be eradicated, by right reason, or free-thinking." [11]

Then he concludes by doubling the insult:

"I am very sensible how much the gentlemen of wit and pleasure are apt to murmur, and be choked at the sight of so many daggled-tail parsons, who happen to fall in their way, and offend their eyes; but at the same time, these wise reformers do not consider what an advantage and felicity it is for great wits to be always provided with objects of scorn and contempt, in order to exercise and improve their talents, and divert their spleen from falling on each other, or on themselves; especially when all this may be done, without the least imaginable danger to their persons. And to urge another argument of a parallel nature: if Christianity were once abolished, how could the free-thinkers, the strong reasoners, and the men of profound learning, be able to find another subject, so calculated in all points whereon to display their abilities? what wonderful productions of wit should we be deprived of, from those, whose genius, by continual practice, has been wholly turned upon raillery and invectives, against religion, and would, therefore, never be able to shine or distinguish themselves upon any other subject! we are daily complaining of the great decline of wit among us, and would we take away the greatest, perhaps the only topic we have left?" [12]

"I do very much apprehend, that in six months time after the act is passed for the extirpation of the gospel, the Bank and East India Stock may fall at least one per cent. And since that is fifty times more, than ever the wisdom of our age thought fit to venture, for the preservation of Christianity, there is no reason we should be at so great a loss, merely for the sake of destroying it." [13]

Swift is only a combatant, I admit; but when we glance at this common-sense and this pride, this empire over the passions of others, and this empire over himself; this force and this employment of hatred, we judge that there have rarely been such combatants. He is a pamphleteer as Hannibal was a *condottiere*.

[11] "An Argument," etc., viii. 192.
[12] Ibid. 196.
[13] Ibid. 200; final words of the Argument.

Section IV.—Swift as a Humorist.—As a Poet

On the night after the battle we usually unbend; we sport, we make fun, we talk in prose and verse; but with Swift this night is a continuation of the day, and the mind which leaves its trace in matters of business leaves also its trace in amusements.

What is gayer than Voltaire's *soirées?* He rails; but do we find any murderous intention in his railleries? He gets angry; but do we perceive a malignant or evil character in his passions? In him all is amiable. In an instant, through the necessity of action, he strikes, caresses, changes a hundred times his tone, his face, with abrupt movements, impetuous sallies, sometimes as a child, always as a man of the world, of taste and conversation. He wishes to entertain us; he conducts us at once through a thousand ideas, without effort, to amuse himself, to amuse us. What an agreeable host is this Voltaire, who desires to please and who knows how to please, who only dreads *ennui,* who does not distrust us, who is not constrained, who is always himself, who is brimful of ideas, naturalness, liveliness! If we were with him, and he rallied us, we should not be angry; we should adopt his style, we should laugh at ourselves, we should feel that he only wished to pass an agreeable hour, that he was not angry with us, that he treated us as equals and guests, that he broke out into pleasantries as a winter fire into sparks, and that he was none the less pleasant, wholesome, amusing.

Heaven grant that Swift may never jest at our expense. The positive mind is too solid and too cold to be gay and amiable. When such mind takes to ridicule, it does not sport with it superficially, but studies it, goes into it gravely, masters it, knows all its subdivisions and its proofs. This profound knowledge can only produce a withering pleasantry. Swift's, at bottom, is but a *reductio ad absurdum,* altogether scientific. For instance, "The Art of Political Lying" [1] is a didactic treatise, whose plan might serve for a model. "In the first chapter of this excellent treatise he (the author) reasons philosophically concerning the nature of the soul of man, and those qualities which render it susceptible of lies. He supposes the soul to be of the nature of a plano-cylindrical speculum, or looking-glass. . . . The

[1] vi. 415.—Arbuthnot is said to have written the whole or at least part of it.—Tr.

plane side represents objects just as they are; and the cylindrical side, by the rules of catoptrics, must needs represent true objects false, and false objects true. In his second chapter he treats of the nature of political lying; in the third of the lawfulness of political lying. The fourth chapter is wholly employed in this question, 'Whether the right of coinage of political lies be wholly in the government.'" Again, nothing could be stranger, more worthy of an archæological society, than the argument in which he proves that a humorous piece of Pope's[2] is an insidious pamphlet against the religion of the state. His "Art of Sinking in Poetry"[3] has all the appearance of good rhetoric; the principles are laid down, the divisions justified; the examples chosen with extraordinary precision and method; it is perfect reason employed in the service of folly.

His passions, like his mind, were too strong. If he wishes to scratch, he tears; his pleasantry is gloomy; by way of a joke, he drags his reader through all the disgusting details of sickness and death. Partridge, formerly a shoemaker, had turned astrologer, Swift, imperturbably cool, assumes an astrologer's title, writes maxims on the duties of the profession, and to inspire confidence, begins to predict:

"My first prediction is but a trifle; yet I will mention it to show how ignorant those sottish pretenders to astrology are in their own concerns: it relates to Partridge the almanack-maker; I have consulted the star of his nativity by my own rules, and find he will infallibly die upon the 29th of March next, about eleven at night, of a raging fever; therefore I advise him to consider of it, and settle his affairs in time."[4]

The twenty-ninth of March being past, he relates how the undertaker came to hang Partridge's rooms "in close mourning"; then Ned, the sexton, asking "whether the grave is to be plain or bricked"; then Mr. White, the carpenter, to screw down the coffin; then the stone-cutter with his monument. Lastly, a successor comes and sets up in the neighborhood, saying in his printed directions, "that he lives in the house of the late ingenious Mr. John Partridge, an eminent practitioner in leather, physic, and astrology."[5] We can tell beforehand the protesta-

[2] "The Rape of the Lock."
[3] xiii. 17.—Pope, Arbuthnot, and Swift wrote it, together.
[4] "Predictions for the Year 1708 by Isaac Bickerstaff," ix. 156.
[5] These quotations are taken from a humorous pamphlet, "Squire Bickerstaff Detected," written by Dr. Yalden. See Swift's Works, ix. 176.—Tr.

tions of poor Partridge. Swift in his reply proves that he is dead, and is astonished at his hard words:

"To call a man a fool and villain, an impudent fellow, only for differing from him in a point merely speculative, is, in my humble opinion, a very improper style for a person of his education. . . . I will appeal to Mr. Partridge himself, whether it be probable I could have been so indiscreet, to begin my predictions, with the only falsehood that ever was pretended to be in them? and this in an affair at home, where I had so many opportunities to be exact." [6]

Mr. Partridge is mistaken, or deceives the public, or would cheat his heirs.

This gloomy pleasantry becomes elsewhere still more gloomy. Swift pretends that his enemy, the bookseller Curll, has just been poisoned, and relates his agony. A house-surgeon of a hospital would not write a more repulsive diary more coldly. The details, worked out with the completeness of a Hogarth, are admirably minute, but disgusting. We laugh, or rather we grin, as before the vagaries of a madman in an asylum, but in reality we feel sick at heart. Swift in his gayety is always tragical; nothing unbends him; even when he serves, he pains you. In his "Journal to Stella" there is a sort of imperious austerity; his condescension is that of a master to a child. The charm and happiness of a young girl of sixteen cannot soften him. She has just married him, and he tells her that love is a "ridiculous passion, which has no being but in playbooks and romances"; then he adds, with perfect brutality:

"I never yet knew a tolerable woman to be fond of her sex; . . . your sex employ more thought, memory, and application to be fools than would serve to make them wise and useful. . . . When I reflect on this, I cannot conceive you to be human creatures, but a sort of species hardly a degree above a monkey; who has more diverting tricks than any of you, is an animal less mischievous and expensive, might in time be a tolerable critic in velvet and brocade, and, for aught I know, would equally become them." [7]

Will poetry calm such a mind? Here, as elsewhere, he is most unfortunate. He is excluded from great transports of imagination, as well as from the lively digressions of conversation. He can attain neither the sublime nor the agreeable; he

[6] "A Vindication of Isaac Bickerstaff," ix. 186.

[7] "Letter to a Very Young Lady on her Marriage," ix. 420-422.

has neither the artist's rapture, nor the entertainment of the man of the world. Two similar sounds at the end of two equal lines have always consoled the greatest troubles: the old muse, after three thousand years, is a young and divine nurse; and her song lulls the sickly nations whom she still visits, as well as the young, flourishing races amongst whom she has appeared. The involuntary music, in which thought wraps itself, hides ugliness and unveils beauty. Feverish man, after the labors of the evening and the anguish of the night, sees at morning the beaming whiteness of the opening heaven; he gets rid of himself, and the joy of nature from all sides enters with oblivion into his heart. If misery pursues him, the poetic afflatus, unable to wipe it out, transforms it; it becomes ennobled, he loves it, and thenceforth he bears it; for the only thing to which he cannot resign himself is littleness. Neither Faust nor Manfred have exhausted human grief; they drank from the cruel cup a generous wine, they did not reach the dregs. They enjoyed themselves, and nature; they tasted the greatness which was in them, and the beauty of creation; they pressed with their bruised hands all the thorns with which necessity has made our way thorny, but they saw them blossom with roses, fostered by the purest of their noble blood. There is nothing of the sort in Swift: what is wanting most in his verses is poetry. The positive mind can neither love nor understand it; it sees therein only a kind of mechanism or a fashion, and employs it only for vanity and conventionality. When in his youth Swift attempted Pindaric odes, he failed lamentably. I cannot remember a line of his which indicates a genuine sentiment of nature: he saw in the forests only logs of wood, and in the fields only sacks of corn. He employed mythology, as we put on a wig, ill-timed, wearily and scornfully. His best piece, "Cadenus and Vanessa," [8] is a poor, threadbare allegory. To praise Vanessa, he supposes that the nymphs and shepherds pleaded before Venus, the first against men, the second against women; and that Venus, wishing to end the debates, made in Vanesso a model of perfection. What can such a conception furnish but flat apostrophes and pedantic comparisons? Swift, who elsewhere gives a recipe for an epic poem, is here the first to make use of it. And even his rude prosaic freaks tear this Greek frippery at every turn. He puts a legal procedure

[8] "Cadenus and Vanessa," xiv. 441.

into heaven; he makes Venus use all kinds of technical terms. He introduces witnesses, " questions on the fact, bill with costs dismissed," etc. They talk so loud that the goddess fears to lose her influence, to be driven from Olympus, or else

> " Shut out from heaven and earth,
> Fly to the sea, my place of birth:
> There live with daggled mermaids pent,
> And keep on fish perpetual Lent." [9]

When he relates the touching history of " Baucis and Philemon," he degrades it by a travesty. He does not love the ancient nobleness and beauty; the two gods become in his hands begging friars, Philemon and Baucis Kentish peasants. For a recompense, their house becomes a church, and Philemon a parson:

> " His talk was now of tithes and dues;
> He smoked his pipe and read the news. . . .
> Against dissenters would repine,
> And stood up firm for ' right divine.' " [10]

Wit luxuriates, incisive, in little compact verses, vigorously coined, of extreme conciseness, facility, precision; but compared to La Fontaine, it is wine turned into vinegar. Even when he comes to the charming Vanessa, his vein is still the same: to praise her childhood, he puts her name first on the list, as a little model girl, just like a schoolmaster:

> " And all their conduct would be tried
> By her, as an unerring guide:
> Offending daughters oft would hear
> Vanessa's praise rung in their ear:
> Miss Betty, when she does a fault,
> Lets fall her knife, or spills the salt,
> Will thus be by her mother chid:
> ' 'Tis what Vanessa never did! ' " [11]

A strange way of admiring Vanessa, and of proving his admiration for her. He calls her a nymph, and treats her like a schoolgirl! Cadenus " now could praise, esteem, approve, but understood not what was love! " Nothing could be truer, and Stella felt it, like others. The verses which he writes every year on her birthday, are a pedagogue's censures and praises; if he gives her

[9] " Cadenus and Vanessa," xiv. 441.
[10] " Baucis and Philemon," xiv. 83.
[11] " Cadenus and Vanessa," xiv. 448.

any good marks, it is with restrictions. Once he inflicts on her a little sermon on want of patience; again, by way of compliment, he concocts this delicate warning:

> " Stella, this day is thirty-four
> (We shan't dispute a year or more).
> However, Stella, be not troubled,
> Although thy size and years are doubled
> Since first I saw thee at sixteen,
> The brightest virgin on the green;
> So little is thy form declin'd,
> Made up so largely in thy mind."

And he insists with exquisite taste:

> " O, would it please the gods to split
> Thy beauty, size, and years, and wit!
> No age could furnish out a pair
> Of nymphs so graceful, wise, and fair." [12]

Decidedly this man is an artisan, strong of arm, terrible at his work and in a fray, but narrow of soul, treating a woman as if she were a log of wood. Rhyme and rhythm are only business-like tools, which have served him to press and launch his thought; he has put nothing but prose into them: poetry was too fine to be grasped by those coarse hands.

But in prosaic subjects, what truth and force! How this masculine nakedness crushes the affected elegance and artificial poetry of Addison and Pope! There are no epithets; he leaves his thought as he conceived it, valuing it for and by itself, needing neither ornaments, nor preparation, nor extension; above the tricks of the profession, scholastic conventionalisms, the vanity of the rhymester, the difficulties of the art; master of his subject and of himself. This simplicity and naturalness astonish us in verse. Here, as elsewhere, his originality is entire, and his genius creative; he surpasses his classical and timid age; he tyrannizes over form, breaks it, dare utter anything, spares himself no strong word. Acknowledge the greatness of this invention and audacity; he alone is a superior being, who finds everything and copies nothing. What a biting comicality in the " Grand Question Debated "! He has to represent the entrance of a captain into a castle, his airs, his insolence, his folly, and the

[12] " Verses on Stella's Birthday," March 13, 1718-19, xiv. 469.

admiration caused by these qualities! The lady serves him first; the servants stare at him:

> "The parsons for envy are ready to burst;
> The servants amazed are scarce ever able
> To keep off their eyes, as they wait at the table;
> And Molly and I have thrust in our nose
> To peep at the captain in all his fine clo'es.
> Dear madam, be sure he's a fine spoken man,
> Do but hear on the clergy how glib his tongue ran:
> 'And madam,' says he, 'if such dinners you give,
> You'll ne'er want for parsons as long as you live.
> I ne'er knew a parson without a good nose:
> But the devil's as welcome wherever he goes;
> G—d—n me! they bid us reform and repent,
> But, z—s! by their looks they never keep Lent:
> Mister curate, for all your grave looks, I'm afraid
> You cast a sheep's eye on her ladyship's maid:
> I wish she would lend you her pretty white hand
> In mending your cassock, and smoothing your band'
> (For the dean was so shabby, and look'd like a ninny,
> That the captain suppos'd he was curate to Jinny).
> Whenever you see a cassock and gown,
> A hundred to one but it covers a clown.
> Observe how a parson comes into a room,
> G—d—n me, he hobbles as bad as my groom;
> A scholard, when just from his college broke loose,
> Can hardly tell how to cry bo to a goose;
> Your Noveds and Bluturks and Omurs,[13] and stuff,
> By G—, they don't signify this pinch of snuff;
> To give a young gentleman right education,
> The army's the only good school in the nation." [14]

This has been *seen*, and herein lies the beauty of Swift's verses: they are personal; they are not developed themes, but impressions felt and observations collected. Read "The Journal of a Modern Lady," "The Furniture of a Woman's Mind," and other pieces by the dozen: they are dialogues transcribed or opinions put on paper after quitting a drawing-room. "The Progress of Marriage" represents a dean of fifty-two married to a young worldly coquette; do we not see in this title alone all the fears of the bachelor of St. Patrick's? What diary is more familiar and more pungent than his verses on his own death?

> "'He hardly breathes.' 'The Dean is dead.'
> Before the passing bell begun,

[13] Ovids, Plutarchs, Homers. [14] "The Grand Question Debated," xv. 153.

The news through half the town has run;
'O may we all for death prepare!
What has he left? and who's his heir?'
'I know no more than what the news is;
'Tis all bequeathed to public uses.'
'To public uses! there's a whim!
What had the public done for him?
Mere envy, avarice, and pride:
He gave it all—but first he died.
And had the Dean in all the nation
No worthy friend, no poor relation?
So ready to do strangers good,
Forgetting his own flesh and blood!' . . .
Poor Pope will grieve a month, and Gay
A week, and Arbuthnot a day. . . .
My female friends, whose tender hearts
Have better learn'd to act their parts,
Receive the news in doleful dumps:
The Dean is dead (pray what is trumps?)
Then, Lord, have mercy on his soul!
(Ladies, I'll venture for the vole.)
Six Deans, they say, must bear the pall.
(I wish I knew what king to call.)
Madam, your husband will attend
The funeral of so good a friend?
No, madam, 'tis a shocking sight,
And he's engaged to-morrow night:
My Lady Club will take it ill,
If he should fail her at quadrille.
He lov'd the Dean—(I lead a heart),
But dearest friends they say must part.
His time was come: he ran his race;
We hope he's in a better place." [15]

Such is the inventory of human friendships. All poetry exalts the mind, but this depresses it; instead of concealing reality, it unveils it; instead of creating illusions, it removes them. When he wishes to give a description of the morning,[16] he shows us the street-sweepers, the "watchful bailiffs," and imitates the different street cries. When he wishes to paint the rain,[17] he describes "filth of all hues and odors," the "swelling kennels," the "dead cats," "turnip-tops," "stinking sprats," which "come tumbling down the flood." His long verses whirl all this filth in their eddies. We smile to see poetry degraded to this use; we seem to

[15] "On the Death of Dr. Swift," xiv. 331.
[16] Swift's Works, xiv. 93.
[17] "A Description of a City Shower," xiv. 94.

be at a masquerade; it is a queen travestied into a rough country girl. We stop, we look on, with the sort of pleasure we feel in drinking a bitter draught. Truth is always good to know, and in the splendid piece which artists show us we need a manager to tell us the number of the hired applauders and of the supernumeraries. It would be well if he only drew up such a list! Numbers look ugly, but they only affect the mind; other things, the oil of the lamps, the odors of the side scenes, all that we cannot name, remains to be told. I cannot do more than hint at the length to which Swift carries us; but this I must do, for these extremes are the supreme effort of his despair and his genius: we must touch upon them in order to measure and know him. He drags poetry not only through the mud, but into the filth; he rolls in it like a raging madman, he enthrones himself in it, and bespatters all passers-by. Compared with his, all foul words are decent and agreeable. In Aretin and Brantôme, in La Fontaine and Voltaire, there is a *soupçon* of pleasure. With the first, unchecked sensuality, with the others, malicious gayety, are excuses; we are scandalized, not disgusted; we do not like to see in a man a bull's fury or an ape's buffoonery; but the bull is so eager and strong, the ape so funny and smart, that we end by looking on or being amused. Then, again, however coarse their pictures may be, they speak of the accompaniments of love: Swift touches only upon the results of digestion, and that merely with disgust and revenge; he pours them out with horror and sneering at the wretches whom he describes. He must not in this be compared to Rabelais; that good giant, that drunken doctor, rolls himself joyously about on his dunghill, thinking no evil; the dunghill is warm, convenient, a fine place to philosophize and sleep off one's wine. Raised to this enormity, and enjoyed with this heedlessness, the bodily functions become poetical. When the casks are emptied down the giant's throat, and the viands are gorged, we sympathize with so much bodily comfort; in the heavings of this colossal belly and the laughter of this Homeric mouth, we see as through a mist, the relics of bacchanal religions, the fecundity, the monstrous joy of nature; these are the splendors and disorders of its first births. The cruel positive mind, on the contrary, clings only to vileness; it will only see what is behind things; armed with sorrow and boldness, it spares no ignoble detail, no obscene

word. Swift enters the dressing-room,[18] relates the disenchantments of love,[19] dishonors it by a medley of drugs and physic,[20] describes the cosmetics and a great many more things.[21] He takes his evening walk by solitary walls,[22] and in these pitiable pryings has his microscope ever in his hand. Judge what he sees and suffers; this is his ideal beauty and his jesting conversation, and we may fancy that he has for philosophy, as for poetry and politics, execration and disgust.

Section V.—Swift as a Narrator and Philosopher

Swift wrote the "Tale of a Tub" at Sir William Temple's, amidst all kind of reading, as an abstract of truth and science. Hence this tale is the satire of all science and all truth.

Of religion first. He seems here to defend the Church of England; but what church and what creed are not involved in his attack? To enliven his subject, he profanes and reduces questions of dogma to a question of clothes. A father had three sons, Peter, Martin, and Jack; he left each of them a coat at his death,[1] warning them to wear it clean and brush it often. The three brothers obeyed for some time and travelled sensibly, slaying "a reasonable quantity of giants and dragons."[2] Unfortunately, having come up to town, they adopted its manners, fell in love with several fashionable ladies, the Duchess d'Argent, Mme. de Grands Titres, and the Countess d'Orgueil,[3] and to gain their favors began to live as gallants, taking snuff, swearing, rhyming, and contracting debts, keeping horses, fighting duels, whoring, killing bailiffs. A sect was established who

"Held the universe to be a large suit of clothes, which invests everything: that the earth is invested by the air; the air is invested by the stars, and the stars are invested by the primum mobile. . . . What is that which some call land, but a fine coat faced with green? or the sea, but a waistcoat of water-tabby? . . . You will find how curious journeyman Nature has been, to trim up the vegetable beaux: observe how sparkish a periwig adorns the head of a beech, and what a fine doublet of white sattin is worn by the birch. . . . Is not religion

[18] "The Lady's Dressing-room."
[19] "Strephon and Chloe."
[20] "A Love Poem from a Physician."
[21] "The Progress of Beauty."
[22] "The Problem," and "The Examination of Certain Abuses."

[1] Christian truth.
[2] Persecutions and contests of the primitive church.
[3] Covetousness, ambition, and pride; the three vices that the ancient fathers inveighed against.

a cloak; honesty a pair of shoes worn out in the dirt; self-love a surtout; vanity a shirt; and conscience a pair of breeches; which, though a cover for lewdness as well as nastiness, is easily slipt down for the service of both? . . . If certain ermines and furs be placed in a certain position, we style them a judge; and so an apt conjunction of lawn and black sattin, we entitle a bishop." [4]

Others held also "that the soul was the outward, and the body the inward clothing. . . . This last they proved by Scripture, because in them we live, and move, and have our being." Thus our three brothers, having only very simple clothes, were embarrassed. For instance, the fashion at this time was for shoulder-knots,[5] and their father's will expressly forbade them to "add to or diminish from their coats one thread:

"In this unhappy case they went immediately to consult their father's will, read it over and over, but not a word of the shoulder-knot. . . . After much thought, one of the brothers, who happened to be more book-learned than the other two, said, he had found an expedient. 'It is true,' said he, 'there is nothing in this will, *totidem verbis,* making mention of Shoulder-Knots; but I dare conjecture, we may find them inclusive, or *totidem syllabis.*' This distinction was immediately approved by all; and so they fell again to examine;[6] but their evil star had so directed the matter, that the first syllable was not to be found in the whole writings. Upon which disappointment, he, who found the former evasion, took heart and said: 'Brothers, there are yet hopes, for though we cannot find them *totidem verbis,* nor *totidem syllabis,* I dare engage we shall make them out *tertio modo* or *totidem litteris.*' This discovery was also highly commended; upon which they fell once more to the scrutiny, and picked out S, H, O, U, L, D, E, R, when the same planet, enemy to their repose, had wonderfully contrived that a K was not to be found. Here was a weighty difficulty; but the distinguishing brother . . . now his hand was in, proved by a very good argument, that K was a modern illegitimate letter, unknown to the learned ages, nor anywhere to be found in ancient manuscripts. . . . Upon this all farther difficulty vanished; shoulder-knots were made clearly out to be *jure paterno,* and our three gentlemen swaggered with as large and flaunting ones as the best." [7]

Other interpretations admitted gold lace, and a codicil authorized flame colored satin linings: [8]

"Next winter a player, hired for the purpose by the corporation of fringe-makers, acted his part in a new comedy, all covered with silver fringe, and according to the laudable custom gave rise to that fashion.

[4] "A Tale of a Tub," ix. sec. 2, 79, 81.
[5] Innovations.
[6] The Will.
[7] "A Tale of a Tub," xi. sec. 2, 83.
[8] Purgatory.

Upon which the brothers consulting their father's will, to their great astonishment found these words: 'Item, I charge and command my said three sons to wear no sort of silver fringe upon or about their said coats,' etc. . . . However, after some pause, the brother so often mentioned for his erudition, who was well skilled in criticisms, had found in a certain author, which he said should be nameless, that the same word, which in the will is called fringe, does also signify a broomstick: and doubtless ought to have the same interpretation in this paragraph. This another of the brothers disliked, because of that epithet silver, which could not, he humbly conceived, in propriety of speech, be reasonably applied to a broomstick; but it was replied upon him that this epithet was understood in a mythological and allegorical sense. However, he objected again, why their father should forbid them to wear a broomstick on their coats, a caution that seemed unnatural and impertinent: upon which he was taken up short, as one who spoke irreverently of a mystery, which doubtless was very useful and significant, but ought not to be over-curiously pried into, or nicely reasoned upon." [9]

In the end the scholastic brother grew weary of searching further "evasions," locked up the old will in a strong box,[10] authorized by tradition the fashions which became him, and having contrived to be left a legacy, styled himself My Lord Peter. His brothers, treated like servants, were discarded from his house; they reopened the will of their father, and began to understand it. Martin (Luther), to reduce his clothes to the primitive simplicity, brought off a large handful of points, stripped away ten dozen yards of fringe, rid his coat of a huge quantity of gold-lace, but kept a few embroideries, which could not "be got away without damaging the cloth." Jack (Calvin) tore off all in his enthusiasm, and was found in tatters, besides being envious of Martin, and half mad. He then joined the Æolists, or inspired admirers of the wind, who pretend that the spirit, or breath, or wind, is heavenly, and contains all knowledge:

"First, it is generally affirmed or confessed that learning puffeth men up; and secondly they proved it by the following syllogism: words are but wind; and learning is nothing but words; ergo learning is nothing but wind. . . . This, when blown up to its perfection, ought not to be covetously hoarded up, stifled, or hid under a bushel, but freely communicated to mankind. Upon these reasons, and others of equal weight, the wise Æolists affirm the gift of belching to be the noblest

[9] "A Tale of a Tub," 88.

[10] The prohibition of the laity's reading the Scriptures.

act of a rational creature. . . . At certain seasons of the year, you might behold the priests among them in vast number . . . linked together in a circular chain, with every man a pair of bellows applied to his neighbour's breech, by which they blew each other to the shape and size of a tun; and for that reason with great propriety of speech, did usually call their bodies their vessels." [11]

After this explanation of theology, religious quarrels, and mystical inspirations, what is left, even of the Anglican Church? She is a sensible, useful, political cloak, but what else? Like a stiff brush used with too strong a hand, the buffoonery has carried away the cloth as well as the stain. Swift has put out a fire, I allow; but, like Gulliver at Liliput, the people saved by him must hold their nose, to admire the right application of the liquid, and the energy of the engine that saves them.

Religion being drowned, Swift turns against science; for the digressions with which he interrupts his story to imitate and mock the modern sages are most closely connected with his tale. The book opens with introductions, prefaces, dedications, and other appendices generally applied to swell books—violent caricatures heaped up against the vanity and prolixity of authors. He professes himself one of them, and announces their discoveries. Admirable discoveries! The first of their commentaries will be on

"'Tom Thumb,' whose author was a Pythagorean philosopher. This dark treatise contains the whole scheme of the Metempsychosis, deducing the progress of the soul through all her stages. 'Whittington and his Cat' is the work of that mysterious rabbi Jehuda Hannasi, containing a defence of the gemara of the Jerusalem misna, and its just preference to that of Babylon, contrary to the vulgar opinion." [12]

He himself announces that he is going to publish "A Panegyrical Essay upon the Number Three"; a "General History of Ears"; a "Modest Defence of the Proceedings of the Rabble in all Ages"; an "Essay on the Art of Canting, Philosophically, Physically, and Musically Considered"; and he engages his readers to try by their entreaties to get from him these treatises, which will change the appearance of the world. Then, turning against the philosophers and the critics, sifters of texts, he proves to them, according to their own fashion, that the ancients men-

[11] "A Tale of a Tub," sec. 8, 146. [12] Ibid. Introduction, 72.

tioned them. Can we find anywhere a more biting parody on forced interpretations:

"The types are so apposite and the applications so necessary and natural, that it is not easy to conceive how any reader of a modern eye or taste could overlook them. . . . For first; Pausanias is of opinion, that the perfection of writing correct was entirely owing to the institution of critics: and, that he can possibly mean no other than the true critic, is, I think, manifest enough from the following description. He says, they were a race of men, who delighted to nibble at the superfluities and excrescences of books; which the learned at length observing, took warning, of their own accord, to lop the luxuriant, the rotten, the dead, the sapless, and the overgrown branches from their works. But now, all this he cunningly shades under the following allegory; that the Nauplians in Argos learned the art of pruning their vines, by observing that when an *ass* had browsed upon one of them, it thrived the better and bore fairer fruits. But Herodotus, holding the very same hieroglyph, speaks much plainer, and almost in *terminis*. He has been so bold as to tax the true critics of ignorance and malice; telling us openly, for I think nothing can be plainer, that in the western part of Libya there were *asses* with horns." [13]

Then follow a multitude of pitiless sarcasms. Swift has the genius of insult; he is an inventor of irony, as Shakespeare of poetry; and as beseems an extreme force, he goes to extremes in his thought and art. He lashes reason after science, and leaves nothing of the whole human mind. With a medical seriousness he establishes that vapors are exhaled from the whole body, which, "getting possession of the brain," leave it healthy if they are not abundant, but excite it if they are; that in the first case they make peaceful individuals, in the second great politicians, founders of religions, and deep philosophers, that is, madmen, so that madness is the source of all human genius and all the institutions of the universe. This is why it is very wrong to keep men shut up in Bedlam, and a commission appointed to examine them would find in this academy many imprisoned geniuses "which might produce admirable instruments for the several offices in a state ecclesiastical, civil, and military."

"Is any student tearing his straw in piece-meal, swearing and blaspheming, biting his grate, foaming at the mouth? . . . let the right worshipful commissioners of inspection give him a regiment of dragoons, and send him into Flanders among the rest. . . . You will find a third gravely taking the dimensions of his kennel; a person of fore-

[13] "A Tale of a Tub," sec. 3; "A Digression concerning Critics," 97.

sight and insight, though kept quite in the dark. . . . He walks duly in one pace . . . talks much of hard times and taxes and the whore of Babylon; bars up the wooden window of his cell constantly at eight o'clock, dreams of fire. . . . Now what a figure would all those acquirements amount to if the owner were sent into the city among his brethren? . . . Now is it not amazing to think the society of Warwick-lane should have no more concern for the recovery of so useful a member? . . . I shall not descend so minutely, as to insist upon the vast number of beaux, fiddlers, poets, and politicians that the world might recover by such a reformation. . . . Even I myself, the author of these momentous truths, am a person whose imaginations are hard-mouthed, and exceedingly disposed to run away with his reason, which I have observed, from long experience, to be a very light rider, and easily shaken off; upon which account my friends will never trust me alone, without a solemn promise to vent my speculations in this, or the like manner, for the universal benefit of mankind." [14]

What a wretched man is he who knows himself and mocks himself! What madman's laughter, and what a sob in this hoarse gayety! What remains for him but to slaughter the remainder of human invention? Who does not see here the despair from which sprang the academy of Lagado? Is there not here a foretaste of madness in this intense meditation of absurdity? His mathematician, who, to teach geometry, makes his pupils swallow wafers on which he writes his theorems; his moralist, who, to reconcile political parties, proposes to saw off the occiputs and brain of each "opposite party-man," and "to let the occiputs thus cut off be interchanged"; his economist again, who tries "to reduce human excrement to its original food." Swift is akin to these, and is the most wretched of all, because he nourishes his mind, like them, on filth and folly, and because he possesses what they have not, knowledge and disgust.

It is sad to exhibit human folly, it is sadder to exhibit human perversity: the heart is more a part of ourselves than reason: we suffer less in seeing extravagance and folly than wickedness or baseness, and I find Swift more agreeable in his "Tale of a Tub" than in "Gulliver."

All his talent and all his passions are assembled in this book; the positive mind has impressed upon it its form and force. There is nothing agreeable in the fiction or the style. It is the diary of an ordinary man, a surgeon, then a captain, who describes coolly and sensibly the events and objects which he has

[14] "A Tale of a Tub;" "A Digression concerning Madness," sec. 11, 167.

just seen, but who has no feeling for the beautiful, no appearance of admiration or passion, no delivery. Sir Joseph Banks and Captain Cook relate thus. Swift only seeks the natural, and he attains it. His art consists in taking an absurd supposition, and deducing seriously the effects which it produces. It is the logical and technical mind of a mechanician, who, imagining the decrease or increase in a wheelwork, perceives the result of the changes, and writes down the record. His whole pleasure is in seeing these results clearly, and by a solid reasoning. He marks the dimensions, and so forth, like a good engineer and a statistician, omitting no trivial and positive detail, explaining cookery, stabling, politics: in this he has no equal but De Foe. The lodestone machine which sustains the flying island, the entrance of Gulliver into Liliput, and the inventory of his property, his arrival and maintenance among the Yahoos, carry us with them; no mind knew better the ordinary laws of nature and human life; no mind shut itself up more strictly in this knowledge; none was ever more exact or more limited.

But what a vehemence underneath this aridity! How ridiculous our interests and passions seem, degraded to the littleness of Liliput, or compared to the vastness of Brobdignag? What is beauty, when the handsomest body, seen with piercing eyes, seems horrible? What is our power, when an insect, king of an ant-hill, can be called, like our princes, "sublime majesty, delight and terror of the universe"? What is our homage worth, when a pygmy "is taller, by almost the breadth of a nail, than any of his court, which alone is enough to strike an awe into his beholders"? Three-fourths of our sentiment are follies, and the weakness of our organs is the only cause of our veneration or love.

Society repels us still more than man. At Laputa, at Liliput, amongst the horses and giants, Swift rages against it, and is never tired of abusing and reviling it. In his eyes, "ignorance, idleness, and vice are the proper ingredients for qualifying a legislator; laws are best explained, interpreted, and applied by those whose interest and abilities lie in perverting, confounding, and eluding them." [15] A noble is a wretch, corrupted body and soul, "combining in himself all the diseases and vices transmitted by ten generations of rakes and rascals. A lawyer is a

[15] Swift's Works, xii. "Gulliver's Travels," Part 2, ch. 6, p. 171.

hired liar, wont by twenty years of roguery to pervert the truth if he is an advocate, and to sell it if he is a judge. A minister of state is a go-between, who, having disposed of his wife," or brawled for the public good, is master of all offices; and who, in order better to rob the money of the nation, buys members of the House of Commons with the same money. A king is a practiser of all the vices, unable to employ or love an honest man, persuaded that " the royal throne could not be supported without corruption, because that positive, confident, restive temper, which virtue infused into a man, was a perpetual clog to public business." [16] At Liliput the king chooses as his ministers those who dance best upon the tight-rope. At Luggnagg he compels all those, who are presented to him, to crawl on their bellies and lick the dust.

" When the king has a mind to put any of his nobles to death in a gentle, indulgent manner, he commands the floor to be strewed with a certain brown powder of a deadly composition, which, being licked up, infallibly kills him in twenty-four hours. But in justice to this prince's great clemency, and the care he has of his subjects' lives (wherein it were much to be wished that the monarchs of Europe would imitate him), it must be mentioned for his honour, that strict orders are given to have the infected parts of the floor well washed after every such execution. . . . I myself heard him give directions that one of his pages should be whipped, whose turn it was to give notice about washing the floor after an execution, but maliciously had omitted it; by which neglect, a young lord of great hopes coming to an audience, was unfortunately poisoned, although the King at that time had no design against his life. But this good prince was so gracious as to forgive the poor page his whipping, upon promise that he would do so no more, without special orders." [17]

All these fictions of giants, pygmies, flying islands, are means for depriving human nature of the veils with which habit and imagination cover it, to display it in its truth and its ugliness. There is still one cloak to remove, the most deceitful and familiar. Swift must take away that appearance of reason in which we deck ourselves. He must suppress the sciences, arts, combinations of society, inventions of industries, whose brightness dazzles us. He must discover the Yahoo in man. What a spectacle!

" At last I beheld several animals in a field, and one or two of the same kind sitting in trees. Their shape was very singular and de-

[16] " Gulliver's Travels," Part 3, ch. 8, p. 258. [17] Ibid. Part 3, ch. 9, p. 264.

formed. . . . Their heads and breasts were covered with a thick hair, some frizzled, and others lank; they had beards like goats, and a long ridge of hair down their backs, and the forepart of their legs and feet; but the rest of their bodies was bare, so that I might see their skins, which were of a brown buff colour. . . . They climbed high trees as nimbly as a squirrel, for they had strong extended claws before and behind, terminating in sharp points and hooked. . . . The females . . . had long lank hair on their head, but none on their faces, nor anything more than a sort of down on the rest of their bodies. . . . Upon the whole I never beheld in all my travels so disagreeable an animal, or one against which I naturally conceived so great an antipathy." [18]

According to Swift, such are our brothers. He finds in them all our instincts. They hate each other, tear each other with their talons, with hideous contortions and yells! such is the source of our quarrels. If they find a dead cow, although they are but five, and there is enough for fifty, they strangle and wound each other: such is a picture of our greed and our wars. They dig up precious stones and hide them in their kennels, and watch them "with great caution," pining and howling when robbed: such is the origin of our love of gold. They devour indifferently "herbs, berries, roots, the corrupted flesh of animals," preferring "what they could get by rapine or stealth," gorging themselves till they vomit or burst: such is the portrait of our gluttony and injustice. They have a kind of juicy and unwholesome root, which they "would suck with great delight," till they "howl, and grin, and chatter," embracing or scratching each other, then reeling, hiccoughing, wallowing in the mud: such is a picture of our drunkenness.

"In most herds there was a sort of ruling Yahoo, who was always more deformed in body, and mischievous in disposition, than any of the rest: that this leader had usually a favourite as like himself as he could get, whose employment was to lick his master's feet, . . . and drive the female Yahoos to his kennel; for which he was now and then rewarded with a piece of ass's flesh. . . . He usually continues in office till a worse can be found." [19]

Such is an abstract of our government. And yet he gives preference to the Yahoos over men, saying that our wretched reason has aggravated and multiplied these vices, and concluding with the king of Brobdignag that our species is "the

[18] "Gulliver's Travels," Part 4, ch. 1, p. 286.

[19] Ibid. Part 4, ch. 7, p. 337.

most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth." [20]

Five years after this treatise on man, he wrote in favor of unhappy Ireland a pamphlet which is like the last effort of his despair and his genius.[21] I give it almost whole; it deserves it. I know nothing like it in any literature:

"It is a melancholy object to those who walk through this great town, or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin-doors crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importuning every passenger for an alms. . . . I think it is agreed by all parties that this prodigious number of children . . . is, in the present deplorable state of the kingdom, a very great additional grievance; and therefore, whoever could find out a fair, cheap, and easy method of making these children sound, useful members of the Commonwealth, would deserve so well of the public, as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation. . . . I shall now, therefore, humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection." [22]

When we know Swift, such a beginning frightens us:

"I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child, well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee or a ragout.

"I do therefore humbly offer it to public consideration, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one-fourth part to be males; . . . that the remaining hundred thousand may, at a year old, be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune through the kingdom; always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt, will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter."

"I have reckoned, upon a medium, that a child just born will weigh twelve pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, will increase to twenty-eight pounds.

"I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, labourers, and four-fifths of the farmers), to be about two shillings per annum, rags included; and I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass

[20] "Gulliver's Travels," Part 2, ch. 6, p. 172.

[21] "A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of the poor People in Ireland from being a Burden to their Parents or Country, and for Making them Beneficial to the Public," 1729.

[22] Ibid. vii. 454.

of a good fat child, which, as I have said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat.

"Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require), may flay the carcass; the skin of which, artificially dressed, will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

"As to our city of Dublin, shambles may be appointed for this purpose in the most convenient parts of it; and butchers we may be assured will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the children alive, than dressing them hot from the knife, as we do roasting pigs. . . .

"I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made, are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance. For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of Papists, with whom we are yearly overrun, being the principal breeders of the nation, as well as our most dangerous enemies. . . . Thirdly, whereas the maintenance of a hundred thousand children, from two years old and upward, cannot be computed at less than ten shillings a piece per annum, the nation's stock will be thereby increased fifty thousand pounds per annum, beside the profit of a new dish introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom, who have any refinement in taste. And the money will circulate among ourselves, the goods being entirely of our own growth and manufacture. . . . Sixthly, this would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards, or enforced by laws and penalties. It would increase the care and tenderness of mothers toward their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the public, to their annual profit or expense. . . . Many other advantages might be enumerated, for instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of barrelled beef; the propagation of swine's flesh, and the improvement in the art of making good bacon. . . . But this, and many others, I omit, being studious of brevity.

"Some persons of desponding spirit are in great concern about that vast number of poor people who are aged, diseased, or maimed; and I have been desired to employ my thoughts, what course may be taken to ease the nation of so grievous an encumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter; because it is very well known, that they are every day dying and rotting, by cold and famine, and filth and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the young labourers, they are now in almost as hopeful a condition; they cannot get work, and consequently pine away for want of nourishment, to a degree, that, if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labour, they have not strength to perform it; and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come." [23]

Swift ends with the following ironic lines, worthy of a cannibal:

[23] "A Modest Proposal," etc., 461.

"I profess, in the sincerity of my heart that I have not the least personal interest in endeavouring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the public good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and giving some pleasure to the rich. I have no children by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old and my wife past child-bearing." [24]

Much has been said of unhappy great men, Pascal, for instance. I think that his cries and his anguish are faint compared to this calm treatise.

Such was this great and unhappy genius, the greatest of the classical age, the most unhappy in history, English throughout, whom the excess of his English qualities inspired and consumed, having this intensity of desires, which is the main feature of the race, the enormity of pride which the habit of liberty, command, and success has impressed upon the nation, the solidity of the positive mind which habits of business have established in the country; precluded from power and action by his unchecked passions and his intractable pride; excluded from poetry and philosophy by the clear-sightedness and narrowness of his common-sense; deprived of the consolations offered by contemplative life, and the occupation furnished by practical life; too superior to embrace heartily a religious sect or a political party, too narrow-minded to rest in the lofty doctrines which conciliate all beliefs, or in the wide sympathies which embrace all parties; condemned by his nature and surroundings to fight without loving a cause, to write without taking a liking to literature, to think without feeling the truth of any dogma, warring as a *condottiere* against all parties, a misanthrope disliking all men, a sceptic denying all beauty and truth. But these very surroundings, and this very nature, which expelled him from happiness, love, power, and science, raised him, in this age of French imitation and classical moderation, to a wonderful height, where, by the originality and power of his inventions, he is the equal of Byron, Milton, and Shakespeare, and shows pre-eminently the character and mind of his nation. Sensibility, a positive mind, and pride, forged for him a unique style, of terrible vehemence, withering calmness, practical effectiveness, hardened by scorn, truth and hatred, a weapon of vengeance and war which made his enemies cry out and die under its point and its poison. A

[24] "A Modest Proposal," etc., 466.

pamphleteer against opposition and government, he tore or crushed his adversaries with his irony or his sentences, with the tone of a judge, a sovereign, and a hangman. A man of the world and a poet, he invented a cruel pleasantry, funereal laughter, a convulsive gayety of bitter contrasts; and whilst dragging the mythological trappings, as if it were rags he was obliged to wear, he created a personal poetry by painting the crude details of trivial life, by the energy of a painful grotesqueness, by the merciless revelation of the filth we conceal. A philosopher against all philosophy, he created a realistic poem, a grave parody, deduced like geometry, absurd as a dream, credible as a law report, attractive as a tale, degrading as a dishclout placed like a crown on the head of a divinity. These were his miseries and his strength: we quit such a spectacle with a sad heart, but full of admiration; and we say that a palace is beautiful even when it is on fire. Artists will add: especially when it is on fire.

CHAPTER SIXTH

THE NOVELISTS

Section I.—The Anti-Romantic Novel

AMIDST these finished and perfect writings a new kind makes its appearance, suited to the public tendencies and circumstances of the time, the anti-romantic novel, the work and the reading of positive minds, observers and moralists, not intended to exalt and amuse the imagination, like the novels of Spain and the Middle Ages, not to reproduce or embellish conversation, like the novels of France and the seventeenth century, but to depict real life, to describe characters, to suggest plans of conduct, and judge motives of action. It was a strange apparition, and like the voice of a people buried underground, when, amidst the splendid corruption of high life, this severe emanation of the middle class welled up, and when the obscenities of Mrs. Aphra Behn, still the diversion of ladies of fashion, were found on the same table with De Foe's "Robinson Crusoe."

Section II.—Daniel De Foe

De Foe, a dissenter, a pamphleteer, a journalist, a novel-writer, successively a hosier, a tile-maker, an accountant, was one of those indefatigable laborers and obstinate combatants, who, ill-treated, calumniated, imprisoned, succeeded by their uprightness, common-sense, and energy, in gaining England over to their side. At twenty-three, having taken arms for Monmouth, he was fortunate in not being hung or sent out of the country. Seven years later he was ruined and obliged to hide. In 1702, for a pamphlet not rightly understood, he was condemned to pay a fine, was set in the pillory, imprisoned two years in Newgate, and only the charity of Godolphin prevented his wife and six

children from dying of hunger. Being released and sent as a commissioner to Scotland to treat about the union of the two countries, he narrowly escaped being stoned. Another pamphlet, which was again misconstrued, sent him to prison, compelled him to pay a fine of eight hundred pounds, and only just in time he received the Queen's pardon. His works were copied, he was robbed, and slandered. He was obliged to protest against the plagiarists, who printed and altered his works for their benefit; against the neglect of the Whigs, who did not find him tractable enough; against the animosity of the Tories, who saw in him the chief champion of the Whigs. In the midst of his self-defence he was struck with apoplexy, and continued to defend himself from his bed. Yet he lived on, but with great difficulty; poor and burdened with a family, he turned, at fifty-five, to fiction, and wrote successively "Moll Flanders," "Captain Singleton," "Duncan Campbell," "Colonel Jack," the "History of the Great Plague in London," and many others. This vein exhausted, he diverged and tried another—the "Complete English Tradesman," "A Tour through Great Britain." Death came; poverty remained. In vain had he written in prose, in verse, on all subjects political and religious, accidental or moral, satires and novels, histories and poems, travels and pamphlets, commercial essays and statistical information, in all two hundred and ten works, not of verbiage, but of arguments, documents, and facts crowded and piled one upon another with such prodigality, that the memory, thought, and application of one man seemed too small for such a labor; he died penniless, in debt. However we regard his life, we see only prolonged efforts and persecutions. Joy seems to be wanting; the idea of the beautiful never enters. When he comes to fiction, it is like a Presbyterian and a plebeian, with low subjects and moral aims, to treat of the adventures, and reform the conduct of thieves and prostitutes, workmen and sailors. His whole delight was to think that he had a service to perform and that he was performing it: "He that opposes his own judgment against the current of the times ought to be backed with unanswerable truth: and he that has truth on his side is a fool as well as a coward if he is afraid to own it, because of the multitude of other men's opinions. 'Tis hard for a man to say, all the world is mistaken but himself. But if it be so, who can help it?" Nobody can help it, but then a

man must walk straight ahead, and alone, amidst blows and throwing of mud. De Foe is like one of those brave, obscure, and useful soldiers who, with empty belly and burdened shoulders, go through their duties with their feet in the mud, pocket blows, receive the whole day long the fire of the enemy, and sometimes that of their friends into the bargain, and die sergeants, happy if it has been their good fortune to get hold of the Legion of Honor.

De Foe had the kind of mind suitable to such a hard service, solid, exact, entirely destitute of refinement, enthusiasm, agreeableness.[1] His imagination was that of a man of business, not of an artist, crammed and, as it were, jammed down with facts. He tells them as they come to him, without arrangement or style, like a conversation, without dreaming of producing an effect, or composing a phrase, employing technical terms and vulgar forms, repeating himself at need, using the same thing two or three times, not seeming to imagine that there are methods of amusing, touching, engrossing, or pleasing, with no desire but to pour out on paper the fulness of the information with which he is charged. Even in fiction his information is as precise as in history. He gives dates, year, month, and day; notes the wind, north-east, south-west, north-west; he writes a log-book, an invoice, attorneys' and shopkeepers' bills, the number of moidores, interest, specie payments, payments in kind, cost and sale prices, the share of the king, of religious houses, partners, brokers, net totals, statistics, the geography and hydrography of the island, so that the reader is tempted to take an atlas and draw for himself a little map of the place, to enter into all the details of the history, and to see the objects as clearly and fully as the author. It seems as though our author had performed all Crusoe's labors, so exactly does he describe them, with numbers, quantities, dimensions, like a carpenter, potter, or an old tar. Never was such a sense of the real before or since. Our realists of to-day, painters, anatomists, who enter deliberately on their business, are very far from this naturalness; art and calculation crop out amidst their too minute descriptions. De Foe creates illusion; for it is not the eye which deceives us, but the mind, and that literally: his account of the great plague

[1] See his dull poems, amongst others "Jure divino," a poem in twelve books, in defence of every man's birthright by nature.

has more than once passed for true; and Lord Chatham mistook his "Memoirs of a Cavalier" for an authentic narrative. This was his aim. In the preface to the old edition of "Robinson Crusoe" it is said: "The story is told . . . to the instruction of others by this example, and to justify and honour the wisdom of Providence. The editor believes the thing to be a just history of facts; neither is there any appearance of fiction in it." All his talents lie in this, and thus even his imperfections aid him; his lack of art becomes a profound art; his negligence, repetitions, prolixity, contribute to the illusion: we cannot imagine that such and such a detail, so minute, so dull, is invented; an inventor would have suppressed it; it is too tedious to have been put in on purpose; art chooses, embellishes, interests; art, therefore, cannot have piled up this heap of dull and vulgar accidents; it is the truth.

Read, for instance, "A True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal, the next Day after her Death, to one Mrs. Bargrave, at Canterbury, the 8th of September 1705; which Apparition recommends the perusal of Drelincourt's Book of Consolation against the Fear of Death." [2] The old little chap books, read by aged needlewomen, are not more monotonous. There is such an array of circumstantial and guaranteed details, such a file of witnesses quoted, referred to, registered, compared, such a perfect appearance of tradesman-like honesty, plain, vulgar common-sense, that a man would take the author for an honest retired hosier, with too little brains to invent a story; no writer careful of his reputation would have printed such nonsense. In fact, it was not his reputation that De Foe cared for; he had other motives in his head; we literary men of the present time cannot guess them, being literary men only. But he wanted to sell a pious book of Drelincourt, which would not sell of itself, and in addition, to confirm people in their religious belief by advocating the appearance of ghosts. It was the grand proof then brought to bear on sceptics. Grave Dr. Johnson himself tried to see a ghost, and no event of that time was more suited to the belief of the middle class. Here, as elsewhere, De Foe, like Swift, is a man of action; effect, not noise touches him; he composed "Robinson Crusoe" to warn the impious, as Swift

[2] Compare another story of an apparition, Edgar Poe's "Case of M. Waldemar." The American is a suffering artist; De Foe a citizen, who has common-sense.

wrote the life of the last man hung to inspire thieves with terror! In that positive and religious age, amidst these political and puritanic citizens, practice was of such importance as to reduce art to the condition of its tool.

Never was art the tool of a more moral or more thoroughly English work. Robinson Crusoe is quite a man of his race, and might instruct it even in the present day. He has that force of will, inner enthusiasm, hidden ferment of a violent imagination which formerly produced the sea-kings, and now produces emigrants and squatters. The misfortunes of his two brothers, the tears of his relatives, the advice of his friends, the remonstrances of his reason, the remorse of his conscience, are all unable to restrain him: there was "a something fatal in his nature"; he had conceived the idea, he must go to sea. To no purpose is he seized with repentance during the first storm; he drowns in punch these "fits" of conscience. To no purpose is he warned by shipwreck and a narrow escape from death; he is hardened, and grows obstinate. To no purpose captivity among the Moors and the possession of a fruitful plantation invite repose; the indomitable instinct returns; he was born to be his own destroyer, and embarks again. The ship goes down; he is cast alone on a desert island; then his native energy found its vent and its employment; like his descendants, the pioneers of Australia and America, he must recreate and remaster one by one the inventions and acquisitions of human industry; one by one he does so. Nothing represses his effort; neither possession nor weariness:

> "I had the biggest magazine of all kinds now that ever was laid up, I believe, for one man; but I was not satisfied still; for, while the ship sat upright in that posture, I thought I ought to get everything out of her that I could. . . . I got most of the pieces of cable ashore, and some of the iron, though with infinite labour; for I was fain to dip for it into the water; a work which fatigued me very much. . . . I believe, verily, had the calm weather held, I should have brought away the whole ship, piece by piece." [3]

In his eyes, work is natural. When, in order "to barricade himself, he goes to cut the piles in the woods, and drives them into the earth, which cost a great deal of time and labour," he says: "A very laborious and tedious work. But what need I have

[3] De Foe's Works, 20 vols. 1819-21. "The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe," i. ch. iv. 65.

been concerned at the tediousness of anything I had to do, seeing I had time enough to do it in? . . . My time or labor was little worth, and so it was as well employed one way as another." [4] Application and fatigue of head and arms give occupation to his superfluous activity and force; the mill-stone must find grist to grind, without which, turning round empty, it would wear itself away. He works, therefore, all day and night, at once carpenter, oarsman, porter, hunter, tiller of the ground, potter, tailor, milkman, basketmaker, grinder, baker, invincible in difficulties, disappointments, expenditure of time and toil. Having but a hatchet and an adze, it took him forty-two days to make a board. He occupied two months in making his first two jars; five months in making his first boat; then, "by dint of hard labour," he levelled the ground from his timber-yard to the sea, then, not being able to bring his boat to the sea, he tried to bring the sea up to his boat, and began to dig a canal; then, reckoning that he would require ten or twelve years to finish the task, he builds another boat at another place, with another canal half a mile long, four feet deep, six wide. He spends two years over it: "I bore with this. . . . I went through that by dint of hard labour. . . . Many a weary stroke it had cost. . . . This will testify that I was not idle. . . . As I had learned not to despair of anything I never grudged my labour." These strong expressions of indomitable patience are ever recurring. These stout-hearted men are framed for labor, as their sheep are for slaughter and their horses for racing. Even now we may hear their mighty hatchet and pickaxe sounding in the claims of Melbourne and in the log-houses of the Salt Lake. The reason of their success is the same there as here; they do everything with calculation and method; they rationalize their energy, which is like a torrent they make a canal for. Crusoe sets to work only after deliberate calculation and reflection. When he seeks a spot for his tent, he enumerates the four conditions of the place he requires. When he wishes to escape despair, he draws up impartially, "like debtor and creditor," the list of his advantages and disadvantages, putting them in two columns, active and passive, item for item, so that the balance is in his favor. His courage is only the servant of his common-sense: "By stating and squaring everything by reason, and by making the most

[4] "Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe," i. ch. iv. 76.

rational judgment of things, every man may be in time master of every mechanic art. I had never handled a tool in my life, and yet in time, by labour, application, and contrivance, I found at last that I wanted nothing but I could have made, especially if I had had tools." [5] There is a grave and deep pleasure in this painful success, and in this personal acquisition. The squatter, like Crusoe, takes pleasure in things, not only because they are useful, but because they are his work. He feels himself a man, whilst finding everywhere about him the sign of his labor and thought; he is pleased: " I had everything so ready at my hand, that it was a great pleasure to me to see all my goods in such order, and especially to find my stock of all necessaries so great." [6] He returns to his home willingly, because he is there a master and creator of all the comforts he has around him; he takes his meals there gravely and " like a king."

Such are the pleasures of home. A guest enters there to fortify these natural inclinations by the ascendancy of duty. Religion appears, as it must, in emotions and visions: for this is not a calm soul; imagination breaks out into it at the least shock, and carries it to the threshold of madness. On the day when Robinson Crusoe saw the " print of a man's naked foot on the shore," he stood " like one thunderstruck," and fled " like a hare to cover "; his ideas are in a whirl, he is no longer master of them; though he is hidden and barricaded, he thinks himself discovered; he intends " to throw down the enclosures, turn all the tame cattle wild into the woods, dig up the corn-fields." He has all kinds of fancies; he asks himself if it is not the devil who has left this footmark; and reasons upon it:

> " I considered that the devil might have found out abundance of other ways to have terrified me; . . . that, as I lived quite on the other side of the island, he would never have been so simple to leave a mark in a place, where it was ten thousand to one whether I should ever see it or not, and in the sand too, which the first surge of the sea upon a high wind would have defaced entirely. All this seemed inconsistent with the thing itself, and with all notions we usually entertain of the subtlety of the devil." [7]

In this impassioned and uncultivated mind, which for eight years had continued without a thought, and as it were stupid, engrossed in manual labor and bodily wants, belief took root, fos-

[5] " Robinson Crusoe," ch. iv. 79. [6] Ibid. 80. [7] Ibid. ch. xi. 184.

tered by anxiety and solitude. Amidst the risks of all-powerful nature, in this great uncertain upheaving, a Frenchman, a man bred as we are, would cross his arms gloomily, like a Stoic, or would wait like an Epicurean for the return of physical cheerfulness. As for Crusoe, at the sight of the ears of barley which have suddenly made their appearance, he weeps, and thinks at first "that God had miraculously caused this grain to grow." Another day he has a terrible vision: in a fever of excitement he repents of his sins; he opens the Bible, and finds these words, which "were very apt to his case": "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." [8] Prayer then rises to his lips, true prayer, the converse of the heart with a God who answers, and to whom we listen. He also read the words: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." [9] "Immediately it occurred that these words were to me. Why else should they be directed in such a manner, just at the moment when I was mourning over my condition, as one forsaken of God and man?" [10] Thenceforth spiritual life begins for him. To reach its very foundation, the squatter needs only his Bible; with it he carries about his faith, his theology, his worship; every evening he finds in it some application to his present condition: he is no longer alone: God speaks to him, and provides for his energy matter for a second labor to sustain and complete the first. For he now undertakes against his heart the combat which he has maintained against nature; he wants to conquer, transform, ameliorate, pacify the one as he has done with the other. Robinson Crusoe fasts, observes the Sabbath, three times a day he reads the Scripture, and says: "I gave humble and hearty thanks . . . that he (God) could fully make up to me the deficiencies of my solitary state, and the want of human society by his presence, and the communication of his grace to my soul, supporting, comforting, and encouraging me to depend upon his providence, and hope for his eternal presence hereafter." [11] In this disposition of mind there is nothing a man cannot endure or do; heart and hand come to the assistance of the arms; religion consecrates labor, piety feeds patience; and man, supported on one side by his instincts, on the other by his belief, finds himself able to clear the land, to people, to organize and civilize continents.

[8] "Robinson Crusoe," 187, Ps. l. 15.
[9] Heb. xiii. 5.
[10] "Robinson Crusoe," ch. viii. 134.
[11] Ibid. ch. viii. 133.

Section III.—The Evolution of the Eighteenth Century Novel

It was by chance that De Foe, like Cervantes, lighted on a novel of character: as a rule, like Cervantes, he only wrote novels of adventure; he knew life better than the soul, and the general course of the world better than the idiosyncrasies of an individual. But the impulse was given, nevertheless, and now the rest followed. Chivalrous manners had been blotted out, carrying with them the poetical and picturesque drama. Monarchical manners had been blotted out, carrying with them the witty and licentious drama. Citizen manners had been established, bringing with them domestic and practical reading. Like society, literature changed its course. Books were needed to read by the fireside, in the country, amongst the family: invention and genius turn to this kind of writing. The sap of human thought, abandoning the old dried-up branches, flowed into the unseen boughs, which it suddenly made to grow and turn green, and the fruits which it produced bear witness at the same time to the surrounding temperature and the native stock. Two features are common and proper to them. All these novels are character novels. Englishmen, more reflective than others, more inclined to the melancholy pleasure of concentrated attention and inner examination, find around them human medals more vigorously struck, less worn by friction with the world, whose uninjured face is more visible than that of others. All these novels are works of observation, and spring from a moral design. The men of this time, having fallen away from lofty imagination, and being immersed in active life, desire to cull from books solid instruction, just examples, powerful emotions, feelings of practical admiration, and motives of action.

We have but to look around: the same inclination begins on all sides the same task. The novel springs up everywhere, and shows the same spirit under all forms. At this time[1] appear the "Tatler," "Spectator," "Guardian," and all those agreeable and serious essays which, like the novel, look for readers at home, to supply them with examples and provide them with counsels; which, like the novel, describe manners, paint characters, and try to correct the public which, finally, like the novel,

[1] 1709, 1711, 1713.

turn spontaneously to fiction and portraiture. Addison, like a delicate amateur of moral curiosities, complacently follows the amiable oddities of his darling Sir Roger de Coverley, smiles, and with discreet hand guides the excellent knight through all the awkward predicaments which may bring out his rural prejudices and his innate generosity; whilst by his side the unhappy Swift, degrading man to the instincts of the beast of prey and beast of burden, tortures humanity by forcing it to recognize itself in the execrable portrait of the Yahoo. Although they differ, both authors are working at the same task. They only employ imagination in order to study characters, and to suggest plans of conduct. They bring down philosophy to observation and application. They only dream of reforming or chastising vice. They are only moralists and psychologists. They both confine themselves to the consideration of vice and virtue; the one with calm benevolence, the other with savage indignation. The same point of view produces the graceful portraits of Addison and the slanderous pictures of Swift. Their successors do the like, and all diversities of mood and talent do not hinder their works from acknowledging a similar source, and concurring in the same effect.

Two principal ideas can rule, and have ruled, morality in England. Now it is conscience which is accepted as a sovereign; now it is instinct which is taken for a guide. Now they have recourse to grace; now they rely on nature. Now they wholly enslave everything to rule; now they give everything up to liberty. The two opinions have successively reigned in England; and the human frame, at once too vigorous and too unyielding, successively justifies their ruin and their success. Some, alarmed by the fire of an over-fed temperament, and by the energy of unsocial passions, have regarded nature as a dangerous beast, and placed conscience with all its auxiliaries, religion, law, education, proprieties, as so many armed sentinels to repress its least outbreaks. Others, repelled by the harshness of an incessant constraint, and by the minuteness of a morose discipline, have overturned guards and barriers, and let loose captive nature to enjoy the free air and sun, deprived of which it was being choked. Both by their excesses have deserved their defeats and raised up their adversaries. From Shakespeare to the Puritans, from Milton to Wycherley, from Con-

greve to De Foe, from Sheridan to Burke, from Wilberforce to Lord Byron, irregularity has provoked constraint and tyranny revolt. This great contest of rule and nature is developed again in the writings of Fielding and Richardson.

Section IV.—Samuel Richardson

"Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded: in a series of familiar letters from a beautiful young damsel to her parents, published in order to cultivate the principles of virtue and religion in the minds of the youth of both sexes; a narrative which has its foundation in truth and at the same time that it agreeably entertains by a variety of curious and affecting incidents, is entirely divested of all those images which, in too many pieces calculated for amusement only, tend to inflame the minds they should instruct."[1] We can make no mistake, the title is clear. The preachers rejoiced to see assistance coming to them from the very spot where there was danger; and Dr. Sherlock, from his pulpit, recommended the book. Men inquired about the author. He was a printer and bookseller, a joiner's son, who, at the age of fifty, and in his leisure moments, wrote in his shop parlor: a laborious man, who, by work and good conduct, had raised himself to a competency and had educated himself; delicate moreover, gentle, nervous, often ill, with a taste for the society of women, accustomed to correspond for and with them, of reserved and retired habits, whose only fault was a timid vanity. He was severe in principles, and had acquired perspicacity by his rigor. In reality, conscience is a lamp; a moralist is a psychologist; Christian casuistry is a sort of natural history of the soul. He who through anxiety of conscience busies himself in drawing out the good or evil motives of his manifest actions, who sees vices and virtues at their birth, who follows the gradual progress of culpable thoughts, and the secret confirmation of good resolves, who can mark the force, nature, and moment of temptation and resistance, holds in his hand almost all the moving strings of humanity, and has only to make them vibrate regularly to draw from them the most powerful harmonies. In this consists the art of Richardson; he combines whilst he observes;

[1] 1741. The translator has consulted the tenth edition, 1775, 4 vols.

his meditation develops the ideas of the moralist. No one in this age has equalled him in these detailed and comprehensive conceptions, which, grouping to a single end the passions of thirty characters, twine and color the innumerable threads of the whole canvas, to bring out a figure, an action, or a lesson.

This first novel is a flower—one of those flowers which only bloom in a virgin imagination, at the dawn of original invention, whose charm and freshness surpass all that the maturity of art and genius can afterwards cultivate or arrange. Pamela is a child of fifteen, brought up by an old lady, half servant and half favorite, who, after the death of her mistress, finds herself exposed to the growing seductions and persecutions of the young master of the house. She is a genuine child, frank and artless as Goethe's Margaret, and of the same family. After twenty pages, we involuntarily see this fresh rosy face, always blushing, and her laughing eyes, so ready with tears. At the smallest kindness she is confused; she knows not what to say; she changes color, casts down her eyes, as she makes a curtsy; the poor innocent heart is troubled or melts.[2] No trace of the bold vivacity, the nervous coolness, which are the elements of the French girl. She is "a lambkin," loved, loving, without pride, vanity, bitterness; timid, always humble. When her master tries forcibly to kiss her, she is astonished; she will not believe that the world is so wicked. "This gentleman has degraded himself to offer freedoms to his poor servant."[3] She is afraid of being too free with him; reproaches herself, when she writes to her relatives, with saying too often *he* and *him* instead of His Honor; "but it is his fault if I do, for why did he lose all his dignity with me?"[4] No outrage exhausts her submissiveness: he has kissed her, and took hold of her arm so rudely that it was "black and blue"; he has tried worse, he has behaved like a ruffian and a knave. To cap all, he slanders her circumstantially before the servants; he insults her repeatedly, and provokes her to speak; she does not speak, will not fail in her duty to her master. "It is for you, sir, to say what you please, and for me only to say, God bless your honor!"[5] She falls on her

[2] "To be sure I did nothing but curt'sy and cry, and was all in confusion at his goodness."

"I was so confounded at these words, you might have beat me down with a feather. . . . So, like a fool, I was ready to cry, and went away curt'sying, and blushing, I am sure, up to the ears."

[3] "Pamela," vol. i. Letter x.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid. Letter xxvii.

knees, and thanks him for sending her away. But in so much submission what resistance! Everything is against her; he is her master; he is a justice of the peace, secure against all intervention—a sort of divinity to her, with all the superiority and authority of a feudal prince. Moreover, he has the brutality of the times; he rates her, speaks to her like a slave, and yet thinks himself very kind. He shuts her up alone for several months, with "a wicked creature," his housekeeper, who beats and threatens her. He tries on her influence of fear, loneliness, surprise, money, gentleness. And what is more terrible, her own heart is against her: she loves him secretly; her virtues injure her; she dare not lie, when she most needs it;[6] and piety keeps her from suicide, when that seems her only resource. One by one the issues close around her, so that she loses hope, and the readers of her adventures think her lost and ruined. But this native innocence has been strengthened by Puritanic faith. She sees temptations in her weaknesses; she knows that "Lucifer always is ready to promote his own work and workmen";[7] she is penetrated by the great Christian idea, which makes all souls equal before the common salvation and the final judgment. She says: "My soul is of equal importance to the soul of a princess, though my quality is inferior to that of the meanest slave."[8] Wounded, stricken, abandoned, betrayed, still the knowledge and thought of a happy or unhappy eternity are two defences which no assault can carry. She knows it well; she has no other means of explaining vice than to suppose them absent. She considers that wicked Mrs. Jewkes is an atheist. Belief in God, the heart's belief—not the wording of the catechism, but the inner feeling, the habit of picturing justice as ever living and ever present—this is the fresh blood which the Reformation caused to flow into the veins of the old world, and which alone could give it a new life and a new youth.

She is, as it were, animated by this feeling; in the most perilous as in the sweetest moments, this grand sentiment returns to her, so much is it entwined with all the rest, so much has it multiplied its tendrils and buried its roots in the innermost folds of her heart. Her young master thinks of marrying her now,

[6] "I dare not tell a wilful lie."
[7] "Pamela," i. Letter xxv.
[8] Ibid. Letter to Mr. Williams, *i.* 208.

and wishes to be sure that she loves him. She dares not say so, being afraid to give him a hold upon her. She is greatly troubled by his kindness, and yet she must answer. Religion comes to veil love in a sublime half-confession: "I fear not, sir, the grace of God supporting me, that any acts of kindness would make me forget what I owe to my virtue; but . . . my nature is too frank and open to make me wish to be ungrateful; and if I should be taught a lesson I never yet learnt, with what regret should I descend to the grave, to think that I could not hate my undoer; and that, at the last great day, I must stand up as an accuser of the poor unhappy soul, that I could wish it in my power to save!" [9] He is softened and vanquished, descends from that vast height where aristocratic customs placed him, and thenceforth, day by day, the letters of the happy child record the preparations for their marriage. Amidst this triumph and happiness she continues humble, devoted, and tender; her heart is full, and gratitude fills it from every source: "This foolish girl must be, after twelve o'clock this day, as much his wife as if he were to marry a duchess." [10] She "had the boldness to kiss his hand." [11] "My heart is so wholly yours, that I am afraid of nothing but that I may be forwarder than you wish." [12] Shall the marriage take place Monday, or Tuesday, or Wednesday? She dare not say yes; she blushes and trembles: there is a delightful charm in this timid modesty, these restrained effusions. For a wedding present she obtains the pardon of the wicked creatures who have ill-treated her: "I clasped my arms about his neck, and was not ashamed to kiss him once, and twice, and three times, once for each forgiven person." [13] Then they talk over their plans: she shall remain at home; she will not frequent grand parties; she is not fond of cards; she will keep the "family accounts," and distribute her husband's charities; she will help the housekeeper in "the making jellies, comfits, sweetmeats, marmalades, cordials, and to pot, and candy, and preserve," [14] to get up the linen; she will look after the breakfast and dinner, especially when there are guests; she knows how to carve; she will wait for her husband, who perhaps will be so good as now and then to give her an hour or two of his "agreeable conversation," "and will be indulgent to the impertinent overflowings

[9] "Pamela," i. 290.
[10] Ibid. ii. 167.
[11] Ibid. ii. 78.
[12] Ibid. ii. 148.
[13] Ibid. ii. 194.
[14] Ibid. ii. 62.

of my grateful heart." [15] In his absence she will read—"that will help to polish my mind, and make me worthier of your company and conversation"; [16] and she will pray to God, she says, in order "that I may be enabled to discharge my duty to my husband." [17] Richardson has sketched here the portrait of the English wife—a good housekeeper and sedentary, studious and obedient, loving and pious—and Fielding will finish it in his "Amelia."

Pamela's adventures describe a contest: the novel of Clarissa Harlowe represents one still greater. Virtue, like force of every kind, is proportioned according to its power of resistance; and we have only to subject it to more violent tests, to give it its greatest prominence. Let us look in passions of the English for foes capable of assailing virtue, calling it forth, and strengthening it. The evil and the good of the English character is a too strong will.[18] When tenderness and lofty reason fail, the native energy becomes sternness, obstinacy, inflexible tyranny, and the heart a den of malevolent passions, eager to rave and tear each other. Against a family, having such passions, Clarissa Harlowe has to struggle. Her father never would be "controlled, nor yet persuaded." [19] He never "did give up one point he thought he had a right to carry." [20] He has broken down the will of his wife, and degraded her to the part of a dumb servant: he wishes to break down the will of his daughter, and to give her for a husband a coarse and heartless fool. He is the head of the family, master of all his people, despotic and ambitious as a Roman patrician, and he wishes to found a house. He is stern in these two harsh resolves, and inveighs against the rebellious daughter. Above the outbursts of his voice we hear the loud wrath of his son, a sort of plethoric, over-fed bull-dog, excited by his greed, his youth, his fiery temper, and his premature authority; the shrill outcry of the eldest daughter, a coarse, plain-looking girl, with "a plump, high-fed face," exactingly jealous, prone to hate, who, being neglected by Lovelace, revenges herself on her beautiful sister; the churlish growling of the two uncles, narrow-minded old bachelors, vulgar, pig-headed, through their notions of male authority; the grievous

[15] "Pamela," ii. 62.
[16] Ibid. ii. 63.
[17] Ibid.
[18] See in "Pamela" the characters of Squire B. and Lady Davers.
[19] "Clarissa Harlowe," 4th ed. 1751, 7 vols. i. 92.
[20] Ibid. i. 105.

importunities of the mother, the aunt, the old nurse, poor timid slaves, reduced one by one to become instruments of persecution. The whole family have bound themselves to favor Mr. Solmes's proposal to marry Clarissa. They do not reason, they simply express their will. By dint of repetition, only one idea has fixed itself in their brain, and they become furious when anyone endeavors to oppose it. "Who at the long run must submit?" asks her mother; "all of us to you, or you to all of us?" [21] Clarissa offers to remain single, never to marry at all; she consents to give up her property. But her family answered: "They had a right to her obedience upon their own terms; her proposal was an artifice, only to gain time; nothing but marrying Mr. Solmes should do; . . . they should not be at rest till it was done." [22] It must be done, they have promised it; it is a point of honor with them. A girl, a young, inexperienced, insignificant girl, to resist men, old men, people of position and consideration, nay, her whole family—monstrous! So they persist, like brutes as they are, blindly, putting on the screw with all their stupid hands together, not seeing that at every turn they bring the child nearer to madness, dishonor, or death. She begs them, implores them, one by one, with every argument and prayer; racks herself to discover concessions, goes on her knees, faints, makes them weep. It is all useless. The indomitable, crushing will oppresses her with its daily increasing mass. There is no example of such a varied moral torture, so incessant, so obstinate. They persist in it, as if it were a task, and are vexed to find that she makes their task so long. They refuse to see her, forbid her to write, are afraid of her tears. Her sister Arabella, with the venomous bitterness of an offended, ugly woman, tries to make her insults more stinging:

"'The *witty*, the *prudent*, nay the *dutiful* and pi-ous (so she sneeringly pronounced the word) Clarissa Harlowe, should be so strangely fond of a profligate man, that her parents were forced to lock her up, in order to hinder her from running into his arms.' 'Let me ask you, my dear,' said she, 'how you now keep your account of the disposition of your time? How many hours in the twenty-four do you devote to your needle? How many to your prayers? How many to letter-writing? And how many to love? I doubt, I doubt, my little dear, the latter article is like Aaron's rod, and swallows up all the rest. . . . You must therefore bend or break, that is all, child.' [23] . . .

[21] "Clarissa Harlowe," i. Letter xx. 125.

[22] Ibid. i. Letter xxxix. 253.

[23] Ibid. i. Letter xlii. 278.

"'What, not speak yet? Come, my sullen, silent dear, speak one word to me. You must say *two* very soon to Mr. Solmes, I can tell you that. . . . Well, well (insultingly wiping my averted face with her handkerchief) . . . Then you think you may be brought to speak the two words.'" [24]

She continues thus:

"'*This,* Clary, is a pretty pattern enough. But *this* is quite charming?—And *this,* were I you, should be my wedding nightgown. But, Clary, won't you have a velvet suit? It would cut a great figure in a country church, you know. Crimson velvet, suppose! Such a fine complexion as yours, how it would be set off by it!—And do you sigh, love? Black velvet, so fair as you are, with those charming eyes, gleaming through a wintry cloud, like an April sun. Does not Lovelace tell you they are charming eyes?'" [25]

Then, when Arabella is reminded that, three months ago, she did not find Lovelace so worthy of scorn, she nearly chokes with passion; she wants to beat her sister, cannot speak, and says to her aunt, "with great violence": "Let us go, madam; let us leave the creature so swell till she burst with her own poison." [26] It reminds us of a pack of hounds in full cry after a deer, which is caught, and wounded; whilst the pack grow more eager and more ferocious, because they have tasted blood.

At the last moment, when she thinks to escape them, a new chase begins, more dangerous than the other. Lovelace has all the evil passions of Harlowe, and in addition a genius which sharpens and aggravates them. What a character! How English! how different from the Don Juan of Mozart or of Molière! Before everything he wishes to have the cruel fair one in his power: then come the desire to bend others, a combative spirit, a craving for triumph; only after all these come the senses. He spares an innocent, young girl, because he knows she is easy to conquer, and the grandmother "has besought him to be merciful to her." "The *Debellare superbos* should be my motto," [27] he writes to his friend Belford; and in another letter he says, "I always considered opposition and resistance as a challenge to do my worst." [28] At bottom, pride, infinite, insatiable, senseless, is the mainspring, the only motive of all his actions. He acknowledges "that he only wanted Cæsar's outsetting to make

[24] "Clarissa Harlowe," i. Letter xliii. 295.
[25] Ibid. i. Letter xlv. 308.
[26] Ibid. i. Letter xlv. 309.
[27] Ibid. Letter xxxiv. 223.
[28] Ibid. ii. Letter xliii. 315.

a figure among his contemporaries," [29] and that he only stoops to private conquests out of mere whim. He declares that he would not marry the first princess on earth, if he but thought she balanced a minute in her choice of him or of an emperor. He is held to be gay, brilliant, conversational; but this petulance of animal vigor is only external; he is cruel, jests savagely, in cool blood, like a hangman, about the harm which he has done or means to do. He reassures a poor servant who is troubled at having given up Clarissa to him in the following words: "The affair of Miss Betterton was a youthful frolick. . . . I went into mourning for her, though abroad at the time—a distinction I have ever paid to those worthy creatures who died in child-bed by me. . . . Why this squeamishness, then, honest Joseph?" [30] The English roisterers of those days threw the human body in the sewers. One gentleman, a friend of Lovelace, "tricked a farmer's daughter, a pretty girl, up to town, . . . drank her light-hearted, . . . then to the play . . . then to the bagnio, ruined her; kept her on a fortnight or three weeks; then left her to the mercy of the people of the bagnio (never paying for anything), who stript her of all her cloaths, and because she would not take on, threw her into prison, where she died in want and in despair." [31] The rakes in France were only rascals,[32] here they were villains; wickedness with them poisoned love. Lovelace hates Clarissa even more than he loves her. He has a book in which he sets down, he says, "all the family faults and the infinite trouble she herself has given me. When my heart is soft, and all her own, I can but turn to memoranda, and harden myself at once." [33] He is angry because she dares to defend herself, says that he'll teach her to vie with him in inventions, to make plots against and for her conqueror. It is a struggle between them without truce or halting. Lovelace says of himself: "What an industrious spirit have I! Nobody can say that I eat the bread of idleness; . . . certainly, with this active soul, I should have made a very great figure in whatever station I had filled." [34] He assaults and besieges her, spends whole nights outside her house, gives the Harlowes servants of his own, invents stories, introduces personages under a false

[29] "Clarissa Harlowe." i. Letter xii. 65.
[30] Ibid. iii. Letter xviii. 89.
[31] Ibid. vii. Letter xxxviii. 122.
[32] See the Mémoirs of the Marshal de Richelieu.
[33] "Clarissa Harlowe," ii. Letter xxxix. 294.
[34] Ibid. iv. xxxiii. 232.

name, forges letters. There is no expense, fatigue, plot, treachery which he will not undertake. All weapons are the same to him. He digs and plans even when away, ten, twenty, fifty saps, which all meet in the same mine. He provides against everything; he is ready for everything; divines, dares everything, against all duty, humanity, common-sense, in spite of the prayers of his friends, the entreaties of Clarissa, his own remorse. Excessive will, here as with the Harlowes, becomes an iron wheel, which twists out of shape and breaks to pieces what it ought to bend, so that at last, by blind impetuosity, it is broken by its own impetus, over the ruins it has made.

Against such assaults what resources has Clarissa? A will as determined as Lovelace's. She also is armed for war, and admits that she has as much of her father's spirit as of her mother's gentleness. Though gentle, though readily driven into Christian humility, she has pride; she "had hoped to be an example to young persons" of her sex; she possesses the firmness of a man, and above all a masculine reflection.[35] What self-scrutiny! what vigilance! what minute and indefatigable observation of her conduct, and that of others![36] No action, or word, involuntary or other gesture of Lovelace is unobserved by her, uninterpreted, unjudged, with the perspicacity and clearness of mind of a diplomatist and a moralist! We must read these long conversations, in which no word is used without calculation, genuine duels daily renewed, with death, nay, with dishonor before her. She knows it, is not disturbed, remains ever mistress of herself, never exposes herself, is not dazed, defends every inch of ground, feeling that all the world is on his side, no one for her, that she loses ground, and will lose more, that she will fall, that she is falling. And yet she bends not. What a change since Shakespeare! Whence comes this new and original idea of woman? Who has encased these yielding and tender innocents with such heroism and calculation? Puritanism transferred to the laity. Clarissa "never looked upon any duty, much less a voluntary vowed one, with indifference."

[35] See ("Clarissa Harlowe," vol. vii. Letter xlix.) among other things her last will.

[36] She makes out statistics and a classification of Lovelace's merits and faults, with subdivisions and numbers. Take an example of this positive and practical English logic: "That such a husband might unsettle me in all my own principles, and hazard my future hopes. That he has a very immoral character to women. That knowing this, it is a high degree of impurity to think of joining in wedlock with such a man." She keeps all her writings, her memorandums, summaries or analyses of her own letters.

She has passed her whole life in looking at these duties. She has placed certain principles before her, has reasoned upon them, applied them to the various circumstances of life, has fortified herself on every point with maxims, distinctions, and arguments. She has set round her, like bristling and multiplied ramparts, a numberless army of inflexible precepts. We can only reach her by turning over her whole mind and her whole past. This is her force, and also her weakness; for she is so carefully defended by her fortifications, that she is a prisoner; her principles are a snare to her, and her virtue destroys her. She wishes to preserve too much decorum. She refuses to apply to a magistrate, for it would make public the family quarrels. She does not resist her father openly; that would be against filial humility. She does not repel Solmes violently, like a hound, as he is; it would be contrary to feminine delicacy. She will not leave home with Miss Howe; that might injure the character of her friend. She reproves Lovelace when he swears,[37] a good Christian ought to protest against scandal. She is argumentative and pedantic, a politician and a preacher; she wearies us, she does not act like a woman. When a room is on fire, a young girl flies barefooted, and does not do what Miss Clarissa does—ask for her slippers. I am very sorry for it, but I say it with bated breath, the sublime Clarissa had a little mind; her virtue is like the piety of devotees, literal and over-nice. She does not carry us away, she has always her guide of deportment in her hand; she does not discover her duties, but follows instructions; she has not the audacity of great resolutions, she possesses more conscience and firmness than enthusiasm and genius.[38] This is the advantage of morality pushed to an extreme, no matter what the school or the aim is. By dint of regulating man, we narrow him.

Poor Richardson, unsuspiciously, has been at pains to set the thing forth in broad light, and has created Sir Charles Grandison "a man of true honor." I cannot say whether this model has converted many. There is nothing so insipid as an edifying hero. This Sir Charles is as correct as an automaton; he passes his life in weighing his duties, and "with an air of gallantry."[39] When

[37] "Swearing is a most unmanly vice, and cursing as poor and low a one, since it proclaims the profligate's want of power and his wickedness at the same time; for could such a one punish as he speaks, he would be a fiend."—Vol. ii. Letter xxxviii. 282.

[38] The contrary is the case with the heroines of George Sand's novels.

[39] See "Sir Charles Grandison," 7

he goes to visit a sick person, he has scruples about going on a Sunday, but reassures his conscience by saying, "I am afraid I must borrow of the Sunday some hours on my journey; but visiting the sick is an act of mercy." [40] Would anyone believe that such a man could fall in love? Such is the case, however, but in a manner of his own. Thus he writes to his betrothed: "And now, loveliest and dearest of women, allow me to expect the honour of a line, to let me know how much of the tedious month from last Thursday you will be so good to abate. . . . My utmost gratitude will ever be engaged by the condescension, whenever you shall distinguish the day of the year, distinguished as it will be to the end of my life that shall give me the greatest blessing of it and confirm me—forever yours, Charles Grandison." [41] A wax figure could not be more proper. All is in the same taste. There are eight wedding-coaches, each with four horses; Sir Charles is attentive to old people; at table, the gentlemen, each with a napkin under his arm, wait upon the ladies; the bride is ever on the point of fainting; he throws himself at her feet with the utmost politeness: "What, my love! In compliment to the best of parents resume your usual presence of mind. I, else, who shall glory before a thousand witnesses in receiving the honor of your hand, shall be ready to regret that I acquiesced so cheerfully with the wishes of those parental friends for a public celebration." [42] Courtesies begin, compliments fly about; a swarm of proprieties flutters around, like a troop of little love-cherubs, and their devout wings serve to sanctify the blessed tendernesses of the happy couple. Tears abound; Harriet bemoans the fate of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, whilst Sir Charles, "in a soothing, tender, and respectful manner, put his arm round me, and taking my own handkerchief, unresisted, wiped away the tears as they fell on my cheek. Sweet humanity! Charming sensibility! Check not the kindly gush. Dewdrops of heaven! (wiping away my tears, and kissing the handkerchief), dewdrops of heaven, from a mind like that heaven mild and gracious!" [43] It is too much; we are surfeited, we say to ourselves that these phrases should be accompanied by a mandoline. The most patient of mortals feels himself sick at heart

vols. 1811, iii. Letter xvi. 142: "He received the letters, standing up, bowing; and kissed the papers with an air of gallantry, that I thought greatly became him."

[40] "Sir Charles Grandison," vi. Letter xxxi. 236.
[41] Ibid. vi. Letter xxxiii. 252.
[42] Ibid. vi. Letter lii. 358.
[43] Ibid. vi. Letter xxxi. 233.

when he has swallowed a thousand pages of his sentimental twaddle, and all the milk and water of love. To crown all, Sir Charles, seeing Harriet embrace her rival, sketches the plan of a little temple, dedicated to Friendship, to be built on the very spot; it is the triumph of mythological bad taste. At the end, bouquets shower down as at the opera; all the characters sing in unison a chorus in praise of Sir Charles, and his wife says: "But could he be otherwise than the best of husbands, who was the most dutiful of sons, who is the most affectionate of brothers; the most faithful of friends: who is good upon principle in every relation of life!" [44] He is great, he is generous, delicate, pious, irreproachable; he has never done a mean action, nor made a wrong gesture. His conscience and his wig are unsullied. Amen! Let us canonize him, and stuff him with straw.

Nor, my dear Richardson, have you, great as you are, exactly all the wit which is necessary in order to have enough. By seeking to serve morality, you prejudice it. Do you know the effect of these edifying advertisements which you stick on at the beginning or end of your books? We are repelled, feel our emotion diminish, see the black-gowned preacher come snuffling out of the worldly dress which he had assumed for an hour; we are annoyed by the deceit. Insinuate morality, but do not inflict it. Remember there is a substratum of rebellion in the human heart, and that if we too openly set ourselves to wall it up with discipline, it escapes and looks for free air outside. You print at the end of "Pamela" the catalogue of the virtues of which she is an example; the reader yawns, forgets his pleasure, ceases to believe, and asks himself if the heavenly heroine was not an ecclesiastical puppet, trotted out to give him a lesson. You relate at the end of "Clarissa Harlowe" the punishment of all the wicked, great and small, sparing none; the reader laughs, says that things happen otherwise in this world, and bids you put in here like Arnolphe,[45] a description "of the cauldrons in which the souls of those who have led evil lives are to boil in the infernal regions." We are not such fools as you take us for. There is no need that you should shout to make us afraid; that you should write out the lesson by itself, and in capitals, in order to distinguish it. We love art, and you have a scant amount of it;

[44] "Sir Charles Grandison," vii. Letter lxi. 336.

[45] A selfish and misanthropical cynic in Molière's "École des Femmes."—Tr.

we want to be pleased, and you don't care to please us. You copy all the letters, detail the conversations, tell everything, prune nothing; your novels fill many volumes; spare us, use the scissors; be a skilled literary workman, not a registrar of the Rolls office. Do not pour out your library of documents on the high-road. Art is different from nature; the latter draws out, the first condenses. Twenty letters of twenty pages do not display a character; but one brilliant saying does. You are weighed down by your conscience, which compels you to move step by step and slow; you are afraid of your genius; you rein it in; you dare not use loud cries and free speech at the very moment when passion is most virulent; you flounder into emphatic and well-written phrases;[46] you will not show nature as it is, as Shakespeare shows it, when, stung by passion as by a hot iron, it cries out, rears, and bounds over your barriers. You cannot love it, and your punishment is that you cannot see it."[47]

Section V.—Henry Fielding

Fielding protests on behalf of nature; and certainly, to see his actions and his persons, we think him made expressly for that purpose, a robust, strongly built man, above six feet high, sanguine, with an excess of good humor and animal spirits, loyal, generous, affectionate, and brave, but imprudent, extravagant, a drinker, a roisterer, ruined as his father was before him, having seen the ups and downs of life, not always clean, but always jolly. Lady Wortley Montague says of him: "His happy constitution made him forget everything when he was before a venison pasty, or over a flask of champagne."[1] Natural impulse, somewhat coarse but generous, sways him. It does not restrain itself, it flows freely, it follows its own bent, not

[46] Clarissa and Pamela employ too many.

[47] In "Novels and Novelists," by W. Forsyth, 1871, it is said, ch. vii.: "To me, I confess, 'Clarissa Harlowe' is an unpleasant, not to say odious book. . . . If any book deserved the charge of sickly sentimentality, it is this; and that it should have once been so widely popular, and thought admirably adapted to instruct young women in lessons of virtue and religion, shows a strange and perverted state of the public taste, not to say public morals." Mrs. Oliphant, in her "Historical Sketches of the Reign of George Second," 1869, says of the same novel (ii. x. 264): "Richardson was a respectable tradesman, . . . a good printer, . . . a comfortable soul, . . . never owing a guinea nor transgressing a rule of morality; and yet so much a poet, that he has added at least one character (Clarissa Harlowe) to the inheritance of the world, of which Shakespeare need not have been ashamed—the most celestial thing, the highest effort of his generation."—Tr.

[1] "Lady Montague's Letters," ed. Lord Wharncliffe, 2d ed. 3 vols. 1837; Letter to the Countess of Bute, iii. 120.

choice in its course, not confining itself to banks, miry but copious, and in a broad channel. From the outset an abundance of health and physical impetuosity plunges Fielding into gross jovial excess, and the immoderate sap of youth bubbles up in him until he marries and becomes ripe in years. He is gay, and seeks gayety; he is careless, and has not even literary vanity. One day Garrick begged him to cut down an awkward scene, and told him "that a repulse would flurry him so much, he should not be able to do justice to the part." "If the scene is not a good one, let them find that out," said Fielding; just as was foreseen, the house made a violent uproar, and the performer tried to quell it by retiring to the green-room, where the author was supporting his spirits with a bottle of champagne. "What is the matter, Garrick? are they hissing me now?" "Yes, just the same passage that I wanted you to retrench." "Oh," replied the author, "I did not give them credit for it: they have found it out, have they?"[2] In this easy manner he took all mischances. He went ahead without feeling the bruises much, like a confident man, whose heart expands and whose skin is thick. When he inherited some money he feasted, gave dinners to his neighbors, kept a pack of hounds and a lot of magnificent lackeys in yellow livery. In three years he had spent it all; but courage remained, he finished his law studies, prepared a voluminous Digest of the Statutes at Large, in two folio volumes, which remained unpublished, became a magistrate, destroyed bands of robbers, and earned in the most insipid of labors "the dirtiest money upon earth." Disgust, weariness did not affect him; he was too solidly made to have the nerves of a woman. Force, activity, invention, tenderness, all overflowed in him. He had a mother's fondness for his children, adored his wife, became almost mad when he lost her, found no other consolation than to weep with his maid-servant, and ended by marrying that good and honest girl, that he might give a mother to his children; the last trait in the portrait of this valiant plebeian heart, quick in telling all, having no dislikes, but all the best parts of man except delicacy. We read his books as we drink a pure, wholesome, and rough wine, which cheers and fortifies us, and which wants nothing but bouquet.

Such a man was sure to dislike Richardson. He who loves

[2] Roscoe's "Life of Fielding," p. xxv.

expansive and liberal nature, drives from him like foes the solemnity, sadness, and pruderies of the Puritans. His first literary work was to caricature Richardson. His first hero, Joseph, is the brother of Pamela, and resists the proposals of his mistress, as Pamela does those of her master. The temptation, touching in the case of a girl, becomes comical in that of a young man, and the tragic turns into the grotesque. Fielding laughs heartily, like Rabelais, or Scarron. He imitates the emphatic style; ruffles the petticoats and bobs the wigs; upsets with his rude jests all the seriousness of conventionality. If we are refined, or simply well dressed, don't let us go along with him. He will take us to prisons, inns, dunghills, the mud of the roadside; he will make us flounder among rollicking, scandalous, vulgar adventures, and crude pictures. He has plenty of words at command, and his sense of smell is not delicate. Mr. Joseph Andrews, after leaving Lady Booby, is felled to the ground, left naked in a ditch, for dead; a stage-coach came by; a lady objects to receive a naked man inside; and the gentlemen, "though there were several greatcoats about the coach," could not spare them; the coachman, who had two greatcoats spread under him, refused to lend either, lest they should be made bloody.[3] This is but the outset, judge of the rest. Joseph and his friend, the good Parson Adams, give and receive a vast number of cuffs; blows resound; cans of pig's blood are thrown at their heads; dogs tear their clothes to pieces; they lose their horse. Joseph is so good-looking, that he is assailed by the maid-servant, "obliged to take her in his arms and to shut her out of the room"; [4] they have never any money; they are threatened with being sent to prison. Yet they go on in a merry fashion, like their brothers in Fielding's other novels, Captain Booth and Tom Jones. These hailstorms of blows, these tavern brawls, this noise of broken warming-pans and basins flung at heads, this medley of incidents and down-pouring of mishaps, combine to make the most joyous music. All these honest folk fight well, walk well, eat well, drink still better. It is a pleasure to observe these potent stomachs; roast-beef goes down into them as to its natural place. Let us not say that these good arms practise too much on their neighbors' skins: the neighbors' hides are tough, and always heal quickly. Decidedly life is a good

[3] "The Adventures of Joseph Andrews," bk. i. ch. xii. [4] Ibid. i. ch. xviii.

thing, and we will go along with Fielding, smiling by the way, with a broken head and a bellyful.

Shall we merely laugh? There are many things to be seen on our journey: the sentiment of nature is a talent, like the understanding of certain rules; and Fielding, turning his back on Richardson, opens up a domain as wide as that of his rival. What we call nature is this brood of secret passions, often malicious, generally vulgar, always blind, which tremble and fret within us, ill-covered by the cloak of decency and reason under which we try to disguise them; we think we lead them, and they lead us; we think our actions our own, they are theirs. They are so many, so strong, so interwoven, so ready to rise, break forth, be carried away, that their movements elude all our reasoning and our grasp. This is Fielding's domain; his art and pleasure, like Molière's are in lifting a corner of the cloak; his characters parade with a rational air, and suddenly, through a vista, the reader perceives the inner turmoil of vanities, follies, lusts, and secret rancors which make them move. Thus, when Tom Jones's arm is broken, philosopher Square comes to console him by an application of stoical maxims; but in proving to him that "pain was the most contemptible thing in the world," he bites his tongue, and lets slip an oath or two; whereupon Parson Thwackum, his opponent and rival, assures him that his mishap is a warning of Providence, and both in consequence are nearly coming to blows.[5] In the "Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild," the prison chaplain having aired his eloquence, and entreated the condemned man to repent, accepts from him a bowl of punch, because "it is nowhere spoken against in Scripture"; and after drinking, repeats his last sermon against the pagan philosophers. Thus unveiled, natural impulse has a grotesque appearance; the people advance gravely, cane in hand, but in our eyes they are all naked. Understand, they are every whit naked; and some of their attitudes are very lively. Ladies will do well not to enter here. This powerful genius, frank and joyous, loves boorish feasts like Rubens; the red faces, beaming with good humor, sensuality, and energy, move about his pages, flutter hither and thither, and jostle each other, and their overflowing instincts break forth in violent actions. Out of such he creates his chief characters. He has none more lifelike than these, more broadly

[5] "History of a Foundling," bk. v. ch. ii.

sketched in bold and dashing outline, with a more wholesome color. If sober people like Allworthy remain in a corner of his vast canvas, characters full of natural impulse, like Western, stand out with a relief and brightness, never seen since Falstaff. Western is a country squire, a good fellow in the main, but a drunkard, always in the saddle, full of oaths, ready with coarse language, blows, a sort of dull carter, hardened and excited by the brutality of the race, the wildness of a country life, by violent exercise, by abuse of coarse food and strong drink, full of English and rustic pride and prejudice, having never been disciplined by the constraint of the world, because he lives in the country; nor by that of education, since he can hardly read; nor of reflection, since he cannot put two ideas together; nor of authority, because he is rich and a justice of the peace, and given up, like a noisy and creaking weathercock, to every gust of passion. When contradicted, he grows red, foams at the mouth, wishes to thrash someone. "Doff thy clothes." They are even obliged to stop him by main force. He hastens to go to Allworthy to complain of Tom Jones, who has dared to fall in love with his daughter: "It's well for un I could not get at un: I'd a licked un; I'd a spoiled his caterwauling; I'd a taught the son of a whore to meddle with meat for his master. He shan't ever have a morsel of meat of mine, or a varden to buy it. If she will ha un, one smock shall be her portion. I'd sooner give my estate to the sinking fund, that it may be sent to Hanover, to corrupt our nation with." [6] Allworthy says he is very sorry for it: "Pox o' your sorrow. It will do me abundance of good, when I have lost my only child, my poor Sophy that was the joy of my heart, and all the hope and comfort of my age. But I am resolved I will turn her out o' doors; she shall beg, and starve, and rot in the streets. Not one hapenny, not a hapenny shall she ever hae o' mine. The son of a bitch was always good at finding a hare sitting and be rotted to'n; I little thought what puss he was looking after. But it shall be the worst he ever vound in his life. She shall be no better than carrion; the skin o'er it is all he shall ha, and zu you may tell un." [7] His daughter tries to reason with him; he storms. Then she speaks of tenderness and obedience; he leaps about the room for joy, and tears come to his eyes. Then she recommences her

[6] "History of a Foundling," bk. vi. ch. x.

[7] Ibid. bk. vi. ch. x.

prayers; he grinds his teeth, clenches his fist, stamps his feet; "I am determined upon this match, and ha him[8] you shall, damn me, if shat unt. Damn me, if shat unt, though dost hang thyself the next morning."[9] He can find no reason; he can only tell her to be a good girl. He contradicts himself, defeats his own plans; is like a blind bull, which butts to right and left, doubles on his path, touches no one, and paws the ground. At the least sound he rushes head foremost, offensively, not knowing why. His ideas are only starts or transports of flesh and blood. Never has the animal so completely covered and absorbed the man. It makes him grotesque: he is so natural and so brute-like: he allows himself to be led, and speaks like a child. He says: "I don't know how 'tis, but, Allworthy, you make me do always just as you please; and yet I have as good an estate as you, and am in the commission of the peace just as yourself."[10] Nothing holds or lasts with him; he is impulsive in everything; he lives but for the moment. Rancor, interest, no passions of long continuance affect him. He embraces people whom he just before wanted to knock down. Everything with him disappears in the fire of the momentary passion, which floods his brain, as it were, in sudden waves, and drowns the rest. Now that he is reconciled to Tom Jones, he cannot rest until Tom marries his daughter: "To her, boy, to her, go to her. That's it, little honeys, O that's it. Well, what, is it all over? Hath she appointed the day, boy? What, shall it be to-morrow or next day? I shan't be put off a minute longer than next day; I am resolved. . . . I tell thee it is all flimflam. Zoodikers! she'd have the wedding to-night with all her heart. Would'st not, Sophy? . . . Where the devil is Allworthy; . . . Harkee, Allworthy, I'll bet thee five pounds to a crown, we have a boy to-morrow nine months. But prithee, tell me what wut ha? Burgundy, champagne, or what? For please Jupiter, we'll make a night on't."[11] And when he becomes a grandfather, he spends his time in the nursery, "where he declares the tattling of his little granddaughter, who is above a year and a half old, is sweeter music than the finest cry of dogs in England."[12] This is pure nature, and no one has dis-

[8] Blifil.
[9] "History of a Foundling," xvi. ch. ii.
[10] Ibid. xviii. ch. ix.
[11] Ibid. xviii. ch. xii.
[12] Last chapter of the "History of a Foundling."

played it more free, more impetuous, ignoring all rule, more abandoned to physical passions than Fielding.

It is not because he loves it like the great impartial artists, Shakespeare and Goethe; on the contrary, he is eminently a moralist; and it is one of the great marks of the age, that reformatory designs are as decided with him as with others. He gives his fictions a practical aim, and commends them by saying that the serious and tragic tone sours, whilst the comic style disposes men to be "more full of good humour and benevolence." [13] Moreover, he satirizes vice; he looks upon the passions not as simple forces, but as objects of approbation or blame. At every step he suggests moral conclusions; he wants us to take sides; he discusses, excuses, or condemns. He writes an entire novel in an ironical style,[14] to attack and destroy rascality and treason. He is more than a painter, he is a judge, and the two parts agree in him. For a psychology produces a morality: where there is an idea of man, there is an ideal of man; and Fielding, who has seen in man nature as opposed to rule, praises in man nature as opposed to rule; so that, according to him, virtue is but an instinct. Generosity in his eyes is, like all sources of action, a primitive inclination; like all sources of action, it flows on receiving no good from catechisms and phrases; like all sources of action, it flows at times too copious and quick. Take it as it is, and do not try to oppress it under a discipline, or to replace it by an argument. Mr. Richardson, your heroes, so correct, constrained, so carefully made up with their impedimenta of maxims, are cathedral vergers, of use but to drone in a procession. Square or Thwackum, your tirades on philosophical or Christian virtue are mere words, only fit to be heard after dinner. Virtue is in the mood and the blood; a gossipy education and cloistral severity do not assist it. Give me a man, not a show-manikin or a mere machine, to spout phrases. My hero is the man who is born generous, as a dog is born affectionate, and a horse brave. I want a living heart, full of warmth and force, not a dry pedant, bent on squaring all his actions. This ardent and impulsive character will perhaps carry the hero too far; I pardon his escapades. He will get drunk unawares; he will pick up a girl on his way; he will hit out with a zest; he will not refuse a duel; he will suffer a fine lady

[13] Preface to "Joseph Andrews." [14] "Jonathan Wild."

to appreciate him, and will accept her purse; he will be imprudent, will injure his reputation, like Tom Jones; he will be a bad manager, and will get into debt, like Captain Booth. Pardon him for having muscles, nerves, senses, and that overflow of anger or ardor which urges forward animals of a noble breed. But he will let himself be beaten till the blood flows, before he betrays a poor gamekeeper. He will pardon his mortal enemy readily, from sheer kindness, and will send him money secretly. He will be loyal to his mistress, and will be faithful to her, spite of all offers, in the worst destitution, and without the least hope of winning her. He will be liberal with his purse, his trouble, his sufferings, his blood; he will not boast of it; he will have neither pride, vanity, affectation, nor dissimulation; bravery and kindness will abound in his heart, as good water in a good spring. He may be stupid like Captain Booth, a gambler even, extravagant, unable to manage his affairs, liable one day through temptation to be unfaithful to his wife; but he will be so sincere in his repentance, his error will be so involuntary, he will be so carefully, genuinely tender, that she will love him exceedingly,[15] and in good truth he will deserve it. He will be a nurse to her when she is ill, behave as a mother to her; he will himself see to her lying-in; he will feel towards her the adoration of a lover, always, before all the world, even before Miss Matthews, who seduced him. He says, "If I had the world, I was ready to lay it at my Amelia's feet; and so, heaven knows, I would ten thousand worlds."[16] He weeps like a child on thinking of her; he listens to her like a little child. "I believe I am able to recollect much the greatest part (of what she uttered); for the impression is never to be effaced from my memory."[17] He dressed himself "with all the expedition imaginable, singing, whistling, hurrying, attempting by every method to banish thought,"[18] and galloped away, whilst his wife was asleep, because he cannot endure her tears. In this soldier's body, under this brawler's thick breastplate, there is a true woman's heart, which melts, which a trifle disturbs, when she whom he loves

[15] Amelia is the perfect English wife, an excellent cook, so devoted as to pardon her husband his accidental infidelities, always looking forward to the accoucheur. She says ever (bk. iv. ch. vi.), "Dear Billy, though my understanding be much inferior to yours." She is excessively modest, always blushing and tender. Bagillard having written her some love-letters, she throws them away, and says (bk. iii. ch. ix.): "I would not have such a letter in my possession for the universe; I thought my eyes contaminated with reading it."

[16] "Amelia," bk. ii. ch. viii.

[17] Ibid. bk. iii. ch. i.

[18] Ibid. bk. iii. ch. ii.

is in question; timid in its tenderness, inexhaustible in devotion, in trust, in self-denial, in the communication of its feelings. When a man possesses this, overlook the rest; with all his excesses and his follies, he is better than your well-dressed devotees.

To this we reply: You do well to defend nature, but let it be on condition that you suppress nothing. One thing is wanting in your strongly built folks—refinement; delicate dreams, enthusiastic elevation, and trembling delicacy exist in nature equally with coarse vigor, noisy hilarity, and frank kindness. Poetry is true, like prose; and if there are eaters and boxers, there are also knights and artists. Cervantes, whom you imitate, and Shakespeare, whom you recall, had this refinement, and they have painted it; in this abundant harvest, which you have gathered so plentifully, you have forgotten the flowers. We tire at last of your fisticuffs and tavern bills. You flounder too readily in cow-houses, among the ecclesiastical pigs of Parson Trulliber. We would fain see you have more regard for the modesty of your heroines; wayside accidents raise their tuckers too often; and Fanny, Sophia, Mrs. Heartfree, may continue pure, yet we cannot help remembering the assaults which have lifted their petticoats. You are so coarse yourself, that you are insensible to what is atrocious. You persuade Tom Jones falsely, yet for an instant, that Mrs. Waters, whom he has made his mistress, is his own mother, and you leave the reader during a long time buried in the shame of this supposition. And then you are obliged to become unnatural in order to depict love; you can give but constrained letters; the transports of your Tom Jones are only the author's phrases. For want of ideas he declaims odes. You are only aware of the impetuosity of the senses, the upwelling of the blood, the effusion of tenderness, but you are unacquainted with nervous exaltation and poetic rapture. Man, such as you conceive him, is a good buffalo; and perhaps he is the hero required by a people which gives itself the nickname "John Bull."

Section VI.—Tobias Smollett

At all events this hero is powerful and formidable; and if at this period we collect in our mind the scattered features of the faces which the novel-writers have made pass before us, we will feel ourselves transported into a half-barbarous world, and to a race whose energy must terrify or revolt all our gentleness. Now let us open a more literal copyist of life: they are doubtless all such, and declare—Fielding amongst them—that if they imagine a feature, it is because they have seen it; but Smollett has this advantage, that, being mediocre, he chalks out the figures tamely, prosaically, without transforming them by the illumination of genius: the joviality of Fielding and the rigor of Richardson are not there to light up or ennoble the pictures. Let us observe carefully Smollett's manners; let us listen to the confessions of this imitator of Le Sage, who reproaches that author with being gay, and jesting with the mishaps of his hero. He says: "The disgraces of Gil Blas are, for the most part, such as rather excite mirth than compassion: he himself laughs at them, and his transitions from distress to happiness, or at least ease, are so sudden that neither the reader has time to pity him, nor himself to be acquainted with affliction. This conduct . . . prevents that generous indignation which ought to animate the reader against the sordid and vicious disposition of the world. I have attempted to represent modest merit struggling with every difficulty to which a friendless orphan is exposed from his own want of experience as well as from the selfishness, envy, malice, and base indifference of mankind." [1] We hear no longer merely showers of blows, but also knife and sword thrusts, as well as pistol shots. In such a world, when a girl goes out she runs the risk of coming back a woman; and when a man goes out, he runs the risk of not coming back at all. The women bury their nails in the faces of the men; the well-bred gentlemen, like Peregrine Pickle, whip other gentlemen soundly. Having deceived a husband, who refuses to demand satisfaction, Peregrine calls his two servants, "and ordered them to duck him in the canal." [2] Misrepresented by a curate, whom he has horsewhipped, he gets an innkeeper "to

[1] Preface to "Roderick Random."

[2] "Peregrine Pickle," ch. lx.

rain a shower of blows upon his (the parson's) carcase," who also "laid hold of one of his ears with his teeth, and bit it unmercifully."[3] I could quote from memory a score more of outrages begun or completed. Savage insults; broken jaws, men on the ground beaten with sticks, the churlish sourness of conversations, the coarse brutality of jests, give an idea of a pack of bull-dogs eager to fight each other, who, when they begin to get lively, still amuse themselves by tearing away pieces of flesh. A Frenchman can hardly endure the story of "Roderick Random," or rather that of Smollett, when he is on board a man-of-war. He is pressed, that is to say, carried off by force, knocked down, attacked with "cudgels and drawn cutlasses," "pinioned like a malefactor," and rolled on board, covered with blood, before the sailors, who laugh at his wounds; and one of them, "seeing my hair clotted together with blood, as it were, into distinct cords, took notice that my bows were manned with the red ropes, instead of my side."[4] Roderick "desired one of his fellow-captives, who was unfettered, to take a handkerchief out of his pocket, and tie it round his head to stop the bleeding; he (the fellow) pulled out my handkerchief, 'tis true, but sold it before my face to a bum-boat woman for a quart of gin." Captain Oakum declares he will have no more sick in his ship, ordered them to be brought on the quarterdeck, commanded that some should receive a round dozen; some spitting blood, others fainting from weakness, whilst not a few became delirious; many died, and of the sixty-one sick, only a dozen remained alive.[5] To get into this dark, suffocating hospital, swarming with vermin, it is necessary to creep under the close hammocks, and forcibly separate them with the shoulders, before the doctor can reach his patients. Read the story of Miss Williams, a wealthy young girl, of good family, reduced to become a prostitute, robbed, hungry, sick, shivering, strolling about the streets in the long winter nights, amongst "a number of naked wretches reduced to rags and filth, huddled together like swine, in the corner of a dark alley," who depend "upon the addresses of the lowest class, and are fain to allay the rage of hunger and cold with gin; degenerate into a brutal insensibility, rot and die upon a dunghill."[6] She was thrown into Bridewell, where, she says, "in the midst of a hellish crew I was sub-

[3] "Peregrine Pickle," ch. xxix.
[4] Ibid. ch. xxiv.
[5] Ibid. ch. xxvii.
[6] Ibid. ch. xxiii.

jected to the tyranny of a barbarian, who imposed upon me tasks that I could not possibly perform, and then punished my incapacity with the utmost rigour and inhumanity. I was often whipped into a swoon, and lashed out of it, during which miserable intervals I was robbed by my fellow-prisoners of everything about me, even to my cap, shoes, and stockings: I was not only destitute of necessaries, but even of food, so that my wretchedness was extreme." One night she tried to hang herself. Two of her fellow-prisoners, who watched her, prevented her. "In the morning my attempt was published among the prisoners, and punished with thirty stripes, the pain of which co-operating with my disappointment and disgrace, bereft me of my senses, and threw me into an ectasy of madness, during which I tore the flesh from my bones with my teeth, and dashed my head against the pavement." [7] In vain we turn our eyes on the hero of the novel, Roderick Random, to repose a little after such a spectacle. He is sensual and coarse, like Fielding's heroes, but not good and jovial as these. Pride and resentment are the two principal points in his character. The generous wine of Fielding, in Smollett's hands becomes common brandy. His heroes are selfish; they revenge themselves barbarously. Roderick oppresses the faithful Strap, and ends by marrying him to a prostitute. Peregrine Pickle attacks by a most brutal and cowardly plot the honor of a young girl, whom he wants to marry, and who is the sister of his best friend. We get to hate his rancorous, concentrated, obstinate character, which is at once that of an absolute king accustomed to please himself at the expense of others' happiness, and that of a boor with only the varnish of education. We should be uneasy at living near him; he is good for nothing but to shock or tyrannize over others. We avoid him as we would a dangerous beast; the sudden rush of animal passion and the force of his firm will are so overpowering in him, that when he fails he becomes outrageous. He draws his sword against an innkeeper; he must bleed him, grows mad. Everything, even to his generosities, is spoilt by pride; all, even to his gaveties, is clouded by harshness. Peregrine's amusements are barbarous, and those of Smollett are after the same style. He exaggerates caricature; he thinks to amuse us by showing up mouths gap-

[7] "Peregrine Pickle," ch. xxiii.

ing to the ears, and noses half a foot long; he magnifies a national prejudice or a professional trick until it absorbs the whole character; he jumbles together the most repulsive oddities—a Lieutenant Lismahago half roasted by Red Indians; old jack-tars who pass their life in shouting and travestying all sorts of ideas into their nautical jargon; old maids as ugly as monkeys, as fleshless as skeletons, and as sour as vinegar; eccentric people steeped in pedantry, hypochondria, misanthropy, and silence. Far from sketching them slightly, as Le Sage does in "Gil Blas," he brings into prominent relief each disagreeable feature, overloads it with details, without considering whether they are too numerous, without recognizing that they are excessive, without feeling that they are odious, without perceiving that they are disgusting. The public whom he addresses is on a level with his energy and his coarseness; and in order to move such nerves, a writer cannot strike too hard.[8]

But, at the same time, to civilize this barbarity and to control this violence, a faculty appears, common to all, authors and public: serious reflection intent to observe character. Their eyes are turned toward the inner man. They note exactly the individual peculiarities, and stamp them with such a precise mark that their personage becomes a type, which cannot be forgotten. They are psychologists. The title of a comedy of old Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour," indicates how old and national this taste is amongst them. Smollett writes a whole novel, "Humphrey Clinker," on this idea. There is no action in it; the book is a collection of letters written during a tour in Scotland and England. Each of the travellers, after his bent of mind, judges variously of the same objects. A generous, grumbling old gentleman, who employs his spare time by thinking himself ill, a crabbed old maid in search of a husband; a lady's maid, simple and vain, who bravely bungles her spell-

[8] In "Novels and Novelists," by W. Forsyth, the author says, ch. v. 159: "What is the character of most of these books (novels) which were to correct follies and regulate morality? Of a great many of them, and especially those of Fielding and Smollett, the prevailing features are grossness and licentiousness. Love degenerates into a mere animal passion. . . . The language of the characters abounds in oaths and gross expressions. . . . The heroines allow themselves to take part in conversations which no modest woman would have heard without a blush. And yet these novels were the delight of a bygone generation, and were greedily devoured by women as well as men. Are we therefore to conclude that our great-great-grandmothers . . . were less chaste and moral than their female posterity? I answer, certainly not; but we must infer that they were inferior to them in delicacy and refinement. They were accustomed to hear a spade called a spade, and words which would shock the more fastidious ear in the reign of Queen Victoria were then in common and daily use."—Tr.

ing; a series of eccentric people, who one after another bring their oddities on the scene—such are the characters: the pleasure of the reader consists in recognizing their humor in their style, in foreseeing their follies, in perceiving the thread which pulls each of their motions, in verifying the connection between their ideas and their actions. When we push this study of human peculiarities to excess we will come upon the origin of Sterne's talent.

Section VII.—Laurence Sterne

Let us figure to ourselves a man who goes on a journey, with a pair of marvellously magnifying spectacles on his eyes. A hair on his hand, a speck on a table-cloth, a fold of a moving garment, will interest him: at this rate he will not go very far; he will go six steps in a day, and will not quit his room. So Sterne writes four volumes to record the birth of his hero. He perceives the infinitely little, and describes the imperceptible. A man parts his hair on one side; this, according to Sterne, depends on his whole character, which is of a piece with that of his father, his mother, his uncle, and his whole ancestry; it depends on the structure of his brain, which depends on the circumstances of his conception and his birth, and these on the hobbies of his parents, the humor of the moment, the talk of the preceding hour, the difficulties of the parson, a cut thumb, twenty knots made on a bag; I know not how many things besides. The six or eight volumes of "Tristram Shandy" are employed in summing them up; for the smallest and dullest incident, a sneeze, a badly shaven beard, drags after it an inextricable network of inter-involved causes, which from above, below, right and left, by invisible prolongations and ramifications, sink into the depths of a character and in the remote vistas of events. Instead of extracting, like the novel-writers, the principal root, Sterne, with marvellous devices and success, devotes himself to drawing out the tangled skein of numberless threads, which are sinuously immersed and dispersed, so as to suck in from all sides the sap and the life. Slender, intertwined, buried as they are, he finds them; he extricates them without breaking, brings them to the light; and there, where we fancied but a stalk, we see with wonder the underground mass and veg-

etation of the multiplied fibres and fibrils, by which the visible plant grows and is supported.

This is truly a strange talent, made up of blindness and insight, which resembles those diseases of the retina in which the over-excited nerve becomes at once dull and penetrating, incapable of seeing what the most ordinary eyes perceive, capable of observing what the most piercing sight misses. In fact, Sterne is a sickly and eccentric humorist, a clergyman and a libertine, a fiddler and a philosopher, who preferred "whining over a dead ass to relieving a living mother," [1] selfish in act, selfish in word, who in everything takes a contrary view of himself and of others. His book is like a great storehouse of articles of *vertu*, where curiosities of all ages, kinds, and countries lie jumbled in a heap; forms of excommunication, medical consultations, passages of unknown or imaginary authors, scraps of scholastic erudition, strings of absurd histories, dissertations, addresses to the reader. His pen leads him; he has neither sequence nor plan; nay, when he lights upon anything orderly, he purposely contorts it; with a kick he sends the pile of folios next to him over the history he has commenced, and dances on the top of them. He delights in disappointing us, in sending us astray by interruptions and delays.[2] Gravity displeases him, he treats it as a hypocrite: to his liking folly is better, and he paints himself in Yorick. In a well-constituted mind ideas march one after another, with uniform motion or acceleration; in this odd brain they jump about like a rout of masks at a carnival, in troops, each dragging his neighbor by the feet, head, coat, amidst the most general and unforeseen hubbub. All his little lopped phrases are somersaults; we pant as we read. The tone is never for two minutes the same; laughter comes, then the beginning of emotion, then scandal, then wonder, then sensibility, then laughter again. The mischievous joker pulls and entangles the threads of all our feelings, and makes us go higher, thither, in a whimsical manner, like puppets. Amongst these various threads there are two which he pulls more willingly than the rest. Like all men who have nerves, he is subject to sensibility; not that he is really

[1] Byron's Works, ed. Moore, 17 vols. 1832; "Life," iii. 137, note.

[2] There is a distinct trace of a spirit similar to that which is here sketched, in a select few of the English writers. Pultock's "Peter Wilkins the Flying Man," Amory's "Life of John Buncle," and Southey's "Doctor," are instances of this. Rabelais is probably their prototype.—Tr.

kindly and tender-hearted; on the contrary, his life is that of an egotist; but on certain days he must needs weep, and he makes us weep with him. He is moved on behalf of a captive bird, of a poor ass, which, accustomed to blows, "looked up pensive," and seemed to say, "Don't thrash me with it (the halter); but if you will, you may." [3] He will write a couple of pages on the attitude of this donkey, and Priam at the feet of Achilles was not more touching. Thus in a silence, in an oath, in the most trifling domestic action, he hits upon exquisite refinements and little heroisms, a variety of charming flowers, invisible to everybody else, which grow in the dust of the driest road. One day Uncle Toby, the invalided captain, catches, after "infinite attempts," a big buzzing fly, who has cruelly tormented him all dinner-time; he gets up, crosses the room on his suffering leg, and opening the window, cries: "Go, poor devil, get thee gone; why should I hurt thee? This world surely is wide enough to hold both thee and me." [4] This womanish sensibility is too fine to be described; we should have to give a whole story—that of Lefèvre, for instance—that the perfume might be inhaled; this perfume evaporates as soon as we touch it, and is like the weak fleeting odor of flowers, brought for one moment into a sick-chamber. What still more increases this sad sweetness is the contrast of the free and easy waggeries which, like a hedge of nettles, encircle them on all sides. Sterne, like all men whose mechanism is over-excited, has odd desires. He loves the nude, not from a feeling of the beautiful, and in the manner of painters, not from sensuality and frankness like Fielding, not from a search after pleasure like Dorat, Boufflers, and all those refined epicures, who at that time were rhyming and enjoying themselves in France. If he goes into dirty places, it is because they are forbidden and not frequented. What he seeks there is singularity and scandal. The allurement of this forbidden fruit is not the fruit, but the prohibition; for he bites by preference where the fruit is half rotten or worm-eaten. That an epicurean delights in detailing the pretty sins of a pretty woman is nothing wonderful; but that a novelist takes pleasure in watching the bedroom of a musty, fusty old couple, in observing the consequences of

[3] Sterne's Works, 7 vols. 1783, 3; "The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy," vii. ch. xxxii.

[4] "Tristram Shandy," i, ii. ch. xii.

the fall of a burning chestnut in a pair of breeches,[5] in detailing the questions of Mrs. Wadman on the consequences of wounds in the groin,[6] can only be explained by the aberration of a perverted fancy, which finds its amusement in repugnant ideas, as spoiled palates are pleased by the pungent flavor of decayed cheese.[7] Thus, to read Sterne we should wait for days when we are in a peculiar kind of humor, days of spleen, rain, or when through nervous irritation we are disgusted with rationality. In fact his characters are as unreasonable as himself. He sees in man nothing but fancy, and what he calls the hobby-horse—Uncle Toby's taste for fortifications, Mr. Shandy's fancy for oratorical tirades and philosophical systems. This hobby-horse, according to him, is like a wart, so small at first that we hardly perceive it, and only when it is in a strong light; but it gradually increases, becomes covered with hairs, grows red, and buds out all around: its possessor, who is pleased with and admires it, nourishes it, until at last it is changed into a vast wen, and the whole face disappears under the invasion of the parasite excrescence. No one has equalled Sterne in the history of these human hypertrophies; he puts down the seed, feeds it gradually, makes the propagating threads creep round about, shows the little veins and microscopic arteries which inosculate within, counts the palpitations of the blood which passes through them, explains their changes of color and increase of bulk. Psychological observation attains here one of its extreme developments. A far advanced art is necessary to describe, beyond the confines of regularity and health, the exception or the degeneration; and the English novel is completed here by adding to the representation of form the picture of malformations.

Section VIII.—Oliver Goldsmith

The moment approaches when purified manners will, by purifying the novel, give it its final impress and character. Of the two great tendencies manifested by it, native brutality and

[5] "Tristram Shandy," 2, iv. ch. xxvii.
[6] Ibid. 3, ix. ch. xx.
[7] Sterne, Goldsmith, Burke, Sheridan Moore, have a tone of their own, which comes from their blood, or from their proximate or distant parentage—the Irish tone. So Hume, Robertson, Smollett, Scott, Burns, Beattie, Reid, D. Stewart, and others, have the Scottish tone. In the Irish or Celtic tone we find an excess of chivalry, sensuality, expansion; in short, a mind less equally balanced, more sympathetic and less practical. The Scotsman, on the other hand, is an Englishman, either slightly refined or narrowed, because he has suffered more and fasted more.

intense reflection, one at last conquers the other; when literature became severe it expelled from fiction the coarseness of Smollett and the indecencies of Sterne; and the novel, in every respect moral, before falling into the most prudish hands of Miss Burney, passes into the noble hands of Goldsmith. His "Vicar of Wakefield" is "a prose idyl," somewhat spoilt by phrases too rhetorical, but at bottom as homely as a Flemish picture. Observe in Terburg's or Mieris's paintings a woman at market or a burgomaster emptying his long glass of beer: the faces are vulgar, the ingenuousness is comical, the cookery occupies the place of honor; yet these good folks are so peaceful, so contented with their small ordinary happiness, that we envy them. The impression left by Goldsmith's book is pretty much the same. The excellent Dr. Primrose is a country clergyman, the whole of whose adventures have for a long time consisted in "migrations from the blue bed to the brown." He has cousins, "even to the fortieth remove," who come to eat his dinner and sometimes to borrow a pair of boots. His wife, who has all the education of the time, is a perfect cook, can almost read, excels in pickling and preserving, and at dinner gives the history of every dish. His daughters aspire to elegance, and even "make a wash for the face over the fire." His son Moses gets cheated at the fair, and sells a colt for a gross of green spectacles. Dr. Primrose himself writes pamphlets, which no one buys, against second marriages of the clergy; writes beforehand in his wife's epitaph, though she was still living, that she was "the only wife of Dr. Primrose," and by way of encouragement, places this piece of eloquence in an elegant frame over the chimney-piece. But the household continues the even tenor of its way; the daughters and the mother slightly domineer over the father of the family; he lets them do so, because he is an easy-going man; now and again fires off an innocent jest, and busies himself in his new farm, with his two horses, wall-eyed Blackberry and the other without a tail: "nothing could exceed the neatness of my enclosures, the elms and hedge-rows appearing with inexpressible beauty . . . Our little habitation was situated at the foot of a sloping hill, sheltered with a beautiful underwood behind, and a prattling river before; on one side a meadow, on the other a green. . . . (It) consisted but of one story, and was covered with

thatch, which gave it an air of great snugness: the walls on the inside were nicely whitewashed. . . . Though the same room served us for parlour and kitchen, that only made it the warmer. Besides, as it was kept with the utmost neatness, the dishes, plates, and coppers, being well scoured, and all disposed in bright rows on the shelves, the eye was agreeably relieved, and did not want richer furniture." [1] They make hay all together, sit under the honeysuckle to drink a bottle of gooseberry wine; the girls sing, the two little ones read; and the parents "would stroll down the sloping field, that was embellished with blue bells and centaury": "But let us have one bottle more, Deborah, my life, and Moses, gives us a good song. What thanks do we not owe to heaven for thus bestowing tranquillity, health, and competence! I think myself happier now than the greatest monarch upon earth. He has no such fireside, nor such pleasant faces about it." [2]

Such is moral happiness. Their misfortune is no less moral. The poor vicar has lost his fortune, and, removing to a small living, turns farmer. The squire of the neighborhood seduces and carries off his eldest daughter; his house takes fire; his arm was burnt in a terrible manner in saving his two little children. He is put in prison for debt, amongst wretches and rogues, who swear and blaspheme, in a vile atmosphere, sleeping on straw, feeling that his illness increases, foreseeing that his family will soon be without bread, learning that his daughter is dying. Yet he does not give way: he remains a priest and the head of a family, prescribes to each of them his duty; encourages, consoles, provides for, orders, preaches to the prisoners, endures their coarse jests, reforms them; establishes in the prison useful work, and "institutes fines for punishment and rewards for industry." It is not hardness of heart nor a morose temperament which gives him strength; he has the most paternal soul, the most sociable, humane, open to gentle emotions and familiar tenderness. He says: "I have no resentment now; and though he (the squire) has taken from me what I held dearer than all his treasures, though he has wrung my heart (for I am sick almost to fainting, very sick, my fellow-prisoner), yet that shall never inspire me with vengeance. . . . If this (my) submission can do him any pleasure, let him know,

[1] "The Vicar of Wakefield," ch. iv. [2] Ibid. ch. xvii.

that if I have done him any injury, I am sorry for it. . . . I should detest my own heart, if I saw either pride or resentment lurking there. On the contrary, as my oppressor has been once my parishioner, I hope one day to present him up an unpolluted soul at the eternal tribunal." [3] But the hard-hearted squire haughtily repulses the noble application of the vicar, and in addition causes his second daughter to be carried off, and the eldest son to be thrown into prison under a false accusation of murder. At this moment all the affections of the father are wounded, all his consolations lost, all his hopes ruined. "His heart weeps to behold" all this misery, he was going to curse the cause of it all; but soon, returning to his profession and his duty, he thinks how he will prepare to fit his son and himself for eternity, and by way of being useful to as many people as he can, he wishes at the same time to exhort his fellow-prisoners. He "made an effort to rise on the straw, but wanted strength, and was able only to recline against the wall; my son and his mother supported me on either side." [4] In this condition he speaks, and his sermon, contrasting with his condition, is the more moving. It is a dissertation in the English style, made up of close reasoning, seeking only to establish that "Providence has given to the wretched two advantages over the happy in this life," greater felicity in dying; and in heaven all that superiority of pleasure which arises from contrasted enjoyments.[5] We see the sources of this virtue, born of Christianity and natural kindness, but long nourished by inner reflection. Meditation, which usually produces only phrases, results with Dr. Primrose in actions. Verily reason has here taken the helm, and it has taken it without oppressing other feelings; a rare and eloquent spectacle, which, uniting and harmonizing in one character the best features of the manners and morals of that time and country, creates an admiration and love for pious and orderly, domestic and disciplined, laborious and rural life. Protestant and English virtue has not a more approved and amiable exemplar. Religious, affectionate, rational, the Vicar unites predilections which seemed irreconcilable; a clergyman, a farmer, a head of a family, he enhances those characters which appeared fit only for comic or homely parts.

[3] "The Vicar of Wakefield," ch. xxviii.
[4] Ibid. ch. xxviii.
[5] Ibid. ch. xxix.

Section IX.—Samuel Johnson

We now come upon a strange character, the most esteemed of his time, a sort of literary dictator. Richardson was his friend, and gave him essays for his paper; Goldsmith, with an artless vanity, admires him, whilst suffering to be continually outshone by him; Miss Burney imitates his style, and reveres him as a father. Gibbon the historian, Reynolds the painter, Garrick the actor, Burke the orator, Sir William Jones the Orientalist, come to his club to converse with him. Lord Chesterfield, who had lost his favor, vainly tried to regain it, by proposing to assign to him, on every word in the language, the authority of a dictator.[1] Boswell dogs his steps, sets down his opinions, and at night fills quartos with them. His criticism becomes law; men crowd to hear him talk; he is the arbiter of style. Let us transport in imagination this ruler of mind, Dr. Samuel Johnson, into France, among the pretty drawing-rooms, full of elegant philosophers and epicurean manners; the violence of the contrast will mark better than all argument the bent and predilections of the English mind.

There appears then before us a man whose "person was large, robust, approaching to the gigantic, and grown unwieldy from corpulency,"[2] with a gloomy and unpolished air, "his countenance disfigured by the king's evil," and blinking with one of his eyes, "in a full suit of plain brown clothes," and with not overclean linen, suffering from morbid melancholy since his birth, and moreover a hypochondriac.[3] In company he would sometimes retire to a window or corner of a room, and mutter a Latin verse or a prayer.[4] At other times, in a recess, he would roll his head, sway his body backward and forward, stretch out and then convulsively draw back his leg. His biographer relates that it "was his constant anxious care to go out or in at a door or passage, . . . so as that either his right or his left foot should constantly make the first actual movement; . . . when he had neglected or gone wrong in this sort of magical movement, I have seen him go back again, put himself in

[1] See, in Boswell's "Life of Johnson," ed. Croker, 1853, ch. xi. p. 85, Chesterfield's complimentary paper on Johnson's Dictionary, printed in the "World."

[2] Boswell's "Life of Johnson," ed. Croker, ch. xxx. 269.

[3] Ibid. ch. iii. 14 and 15.

[4] Ibid. ch. xviii. 165, n. 4.

the proper posture to begin the ceremony, and having gone through it, walk briskly on and join his companion." [5] People are sitting at table, when suddenly, in a moment of abstraction, he stoops, and clenching hold of the foot of a lady, draws off her shoe.[6] Hardly is the dinner served when he darts on the food; "his looks seemed rivetted to his plate; nor would he, unless when in very high company, say one word, or even pay the least attention to what was said by others; (he) indulged with such intenseness, that, while in the act of eating, the veins of his forehead swelled, and generally a strong perspiration was visible." [7] If by chance the hare was high, or the pie had been made with rancid butter, he no longer ate, but devoured. When at last his appetite was satisfied, and he consented to speak, he disputed, shouted, made a sparring-match of his conversation, triumphed no matter how, laid down his opinion dogmatically, and ill-treated those whom he was refuting. "Sir, I perceive you are a vile Whig." [8] "My dear lady (to Mrs. Thrale), talk no more of this; nonsense can be defended but by nonsense." [9] "One thing I know, which you don't seem to know, that you are very uncivil." [10] In the intervals of articulating he made various sounds with his mouth, sometimes as if ruminating, . . . sometimes giving a half whistle, sometimes making his tongue play backwards from the roof of his mouth, as if clucking like a hen. . . . Generally, when he had concluded a period, in the course of a dispute, . . . he used to blow out his breath like a whale," [11] and swallow several cups of tea.

Then in a low voice, cautiously, men would ask Garrick or Boswell the history and habits of this strange being. He had lived like a cynic and an eccentric, having passed his youth reading miscellaneously, especially Latin folios, even those least known, such as Macrobius; he had found on a shelf in his father's shop the Latin works of Petrarch, whilst he was looking for apples, and had read them;[12] "he published proposals for printing by subscription the Latin poems of Politian." [13] At twenty-five he had married for love a woman of about fifty, "very fat, with swelled cheeks, of a florid red, produced by thick painting, flaring and fantastic in her dress," [14]

[5] Boswell's "Life of Johnson," ch. xviii. 166.
[6] Ibid. ch. xlviii. 439, n. 3.
[7] Ibid. ch. xvii. 159.
[8] Ibid. ch. xxvi. 236.
[9] Ibid. ch. xxii. 201.
[10] Ibid. ch. lxviii. 628.
[11] Ibid. ch. xviii. 166.
[12] Ibid. ch. ii. 12.
[13] Ibid. ch. iv. 22.
[14] Ibid. ch. iv. 26.

and who had children as old as himself. Having come to London to earn his bread, some people, seeing his convulsive grimaces, took him for an idiot; others, seeing his robust frame, advised him to buy a porter's knot.[15] For thirty years he worked like a hack for the publishers, whom he used to thrash when they became impertinent;[16] always shabby, having once fasted two days;[17] content when he could dine on "a cut of meat for sixpence, and bread for a penny";[18] having written "Rasselas" in eight nights, to pay for his mother's funeral. Now pensioned[19] by the king, freed from his daily labors, he gave way to his natural indolence, lying in bed often till midday and after. He is visited at that hour. We mount the stairs of a gloomy house on the north side of Fleet Street, the busy quarter of London, in a narrow and obscure court; and as we enter, we hear the scoldings of four old women and an old quack doctor, poor penniless creatures, bad in health and in disposition, whom he has rescued, whom he supports, who vex or insult him. We ask for the Doctor, a negro opens the door; we gather round the master's bed: there are always many distinguished people at his levee, including even ladies. Thus surrounded, "he declaims, then went to dinner at a tavern, where he commonly stays late,"[20] talks all the evening, goes out to enjoy in the streets the London mud and fog, picks up a friend to talk again, and is busy pronouncing oracles and maintaining his opinion till four in the morning.

Whereupon we ask if it is the freedom of his opinions which is fascinating. His friends answer, that there is no more indomitable partisan of order. He is called the Hercules of Toryism. From infancy he detested the Whigs, and he never spoke of them but as public malefactors. He insults them even in his Dictionary. He exalts Charles II and James II as two of the best kings who have ever reigned.[21] He justifies the arbitrary taxes which Government presumes to levy on the Americans.[22] He declares that "Whigism is a negation of all principle";[23] that "the first Whig was the devil";[24] that "the Crown has

[15] Boswell's "Life of Johnson," ch. v. 28, note 2.
[16] Ibid. ch. vii. 46.
[17] Ibid. ch. xvii. 159.
[18a] Ibid. ch. v. 28.
[19] He had formerly put in his Dictionary the following definition of the word pension: "Pension: an allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state-hireling for treason to his country." This drew of course afterward all the sarcasms of his adversaries upon himself.
[20] Boswell's "Life," ch. xxiv. 216.
[21] Ibid. ch. xlix. 444.
[22] Ibid. ch. xlviii. 435.
[23] Ibid. ch. xvi. 148.
[24] Ibid. ch. lxvi. 606.

not power enough "; [25] that "mankind are happier in a state of inequality and subordination." [26] Frenchmen of the present time, admirers of the "Contrat Social," soon feel, on reading or hearing all this, that they are no longer in France. And what must they feel when, a few moments later, the Doctor says: "I think him (Rousseau) one of the worst of men; a rascal who ought to be hunted out of society, as he has been. . . . I would sooner sign a sentence for his transportation, than that of any felon who has gone from the Old Bailey these many years. Yes, I should like to have him work in the plantations." [27] . . . .

It seems that in England people do not like philosophical innovators. Let us see if Voltaire will be treated better: "It is difficult to settle the proportion of iniquity between them (Rousseau and Voltaire)." [28] In good sooth, this is clear. But can we not look for truth outside an Established Church? No; "no honest man could be a Deist; for no man could be so after a fair examination of the proofs of Christianity." [29] Here is a peremptory Christian; there are scarcely any in France so decisive. Moreover, he is an Anglican, with a passion for the hierarchy, an admirer of established order, an enemy of Dissenters. We see him bow to an archbishop with peculiar veneration.[30] We hear him reprove one of his friends "for saying grace without mention of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." [31] If we speak to him of a Quakers' meeting, and of a woman preaching, he will tell us that "a woman preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs; it is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all." [32] He is a Conservative, and does not fear being considered antiquated. He went at one o'clock in the morning into St. John's Church, Clerkenwell, to interrogate a tormented spirit, which had promised to "give a token of her presence there by a knock upon her coffin." [33] If we look at Boswell's life of him, we will find there fervent prayers, examinations of conscience, and rules of conduct. Amidst prejudices and ridicule he has a deep conviction, an active faith, a severe moral piety. He is a Christian from his heart and conscience, reason and practice. The

[25] Boswell's "Life," ch. xxvi. 236.
[26] Ibid. ch. xxviii. 252.
[27] Ibid. ch. xix. 175.
[28] Ibid. ch. xix. 176.
[29] Ibid. ch. xix. 174.
[30] Ibid. ch. lxxv. 723.
[31] Ibid. ch. xxiv. 218.
[32] Ibid. ch. xvii. 157.
[33] Ibid. ch. xv. 138, note 3.

thought of God, the fear of the last judgment, engross and reform him. He said one day to Garrick: "I'll come no more behind your scenes, David, for the silk stockings and white bosoms of your actresses excite my amorous propensities." He reproaches himself with his indolence, implores God's pardon, is humble, has scruples. All this is very strange. We ask men what can please them in this grumbling bear, with the manners of a beadle and the inclinations of a constable? They answer, that in London people are less exacting than in Paris, as to manners and politeness; that in England they allow energy to be rude and virtue odd; that they put up with a combative conversation; that public opinion is all on the side of the constitution and Christianity; and that society was right to take for its master a man who, by his style and precepts, best suited its bent.

We now send for his books, and after an hour we observe, that whatever the work be, tragedy or dictionary, biography or essay, he always writes in the same style. "Dr. Johnson," Goldsmith said one day to him, "if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like whales." [34] In fact, his phraseology rolls ever in solemn and majestic periods, in which every substantive marches ceremoniously, accompanied by its epithet; grand, pompous words peal like an organ; every proposition is set forth balanced by a proposition of equal length; thought is developed with the compassed regularity and official splendor of a procession. Classical prose attains its perfection in him, as classical poetry in Pope. Art cannot be more finished, or nature more forced. No one has confined ideas in more strait compartments; none has given stronger relief to dissertation and proof; none has imposed more despotically on story and dialogue the forms of argumentation and violent declamation; none has more generally mutilated the flowing liberty of conversation and life by antitheses and technical words. It is the completion and the excess, the triumph and the tyranny of oratorical style.[35] We understand now that an oratorical age

[34] Boswell's "Life," ch. xxviii. 256.

[35] Here is a celebrated phrase, which will give some idea of his style (Boswell's "Journal," ch. xliii. 381): "We are now treading that illustrious island, which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish if it were possible. . . . Far from me and from my friends be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground

would recognize him as a master, and attribute to him in eloquence the mastery which it attributed to Pope in verse.

We wish to know what ideas have made him popular. Here the astonishment of a Frenchman redoubles. We vainly turn over the pages of his Dictionary, his eight volumes of essays, his many volumes of biographies, his numberless articles, his conversation so carefully collected; we yawn. His truths are too true; we already know his precepts by heart. We learn from him that life is short, and we ought to improve the few moments granted to us; [36] that a mother ought not to bring up her son as a fop; that a man ought to repent of his faults, and yet avoid superstition; that in everything we ought to be active, and not hurried. We thank him for these sage counsels, but we mutter to ourselves that we could have done very well without them. We should like to know who could have been the lovers of *ennui* who have bought up thirteen thousand copies of his works. We then remember that sermons are liked in England, and that these essays are sermons. We discover that men of reflection do not need bold or striking ideas, but palpable and profitable truths. They desire to be furnished with a useful provision of authentic examples on man and his existence, and demand nothing more. No matter if the idea is vulgar; meat and bread are vulgar too, and are no less good. They wish to be taught the kinds and degrees of happiness and unhappiness, the varieties and results of character and condition, the advantages and inconveniences of town and country, knowledge and ignorance, wealth and moderate circumstances, because they are moralists and utilitarians; because they look in a book for the knowledge to turn them from folly, and motives to confirm them in uprightness; because they cultivate in themselves sense, that is common, practical reason. A little fiction, a few portraits, the least amount of amusement, will suffice to adorn it. This substantial food only needs a very simple seasoning. It is not the novelty of the dishes, nor dainty cookery, but solidity and wholesomeness, which they seek. For this reason essays are Johnson's national food. It is because they are insipid and dull for Frenchmen that they suit the taste of an Englishman.

which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."

[36] "Rambler," 108, 109, 110, 111.

We understand now why they take for a favorite the respectable, the tiresome Dr. Samuel Johnson.

Section X.—William Hogarth

I would fain bring together all these features, see these figures; only colors and forms complete an idea; in order to know, we must see. Let us go to the picture-gallery. Hogarth, the national painter, the friend of Fielding, the contemporary of Johnson, the exact imitator of manners, will show us the outward, as these authors have shown us the inward.

We enter these great galleries of art. Painting is a noble thing! It embellishes all, even vice. On the four walls, under transparent and brilliant glass, the torsos rise, flesh palpitates, the blood's warm current circulates under the veined skin, speaking likenesses stand out in the light; it seems that the ugly, the vulgar, the odious, have disappeared from the world. I no more criticise characters; I have done with moral rules. I am no longer tempted to approve or to hate. A man here is but a smudge of color, at most a handful of muscles; I know no longer if he be a murderer.

Life, the happy, complete, overflowing display, the expansion of natural and corporal powers; this from all sides floods and rejoices our eyes. Our limbs instinctively move by contagious imitation of movements and forms. Before these lions of Rubens, whose deep growls rise like thunder to the mouth of the cave, before these colossal writhing torsos, these snouts which grope about skulls, the animal within us quivers through sympathy, and it seems as if we were about to emit from our chests a roar to equal their own.

What though art has degenerated even among Frenchmen, epigrammatists, the bepowdered abbés of the eighteenth century, it is art still. Beauty is gone, elegance remains. These pretty arch faces, these slender waspish waists, these delicate arms buried in a nest of lace, these careless wanderings among thickets and warbling fountains, these gallant dreams in a lofty chamber festooned with garlands, all this refined and coquettish society is charming. The artist, then as always, gathers the flowers of things, and cares not for the rest.

But what was Hogarth's aim? who ever saw such a painter?

Is he a painter? Others make us wish to see what they represent; he makes us wish not to see it.

Is there anything more agreeable to paint than a drunken debauch by night? the jolly, careless faces; the rich light, drowned in shadows which flicker over rumpled garments and weighed-down bodies. With Hogarth, on the other hand, what figures! Wickedness, stupidity, all the vile poison of the vilest human passions, drops and distils from them. One is shaking on his legs as he stands, sick, whilst a hiccup half opens his belching lips; another howls hoarsely, like a wretched cur; another, with bald and broken head, patched up in places, falls forward on his chest, with the smile of a sick idiot. We turn over the leaves of Hogarth's works, and the train of odious or bestial faces appears to be inexhaustible; features distorted or deformed, foreheads lumpy or puffed out with perspiring flesh; hideous grins distended by ferocious laughter: one has had his nose bitten off; the next, one-eyed, square-headed, spotted over with bleeding warts, whose red face looks redder under the dazzling white wig, smokes silently, full of rancor and spleen; another, an old man with a crutch, scarlet and bloated, his chin falling on his breast, gazes with the fixed and starting eyes of a crab. Hogarth shows the beast in man, and worse, a mad and murderous, a feeble or enraged beast. Look at this murderer standing over the body of his butchered mistress, with squinting eyes, distorted mouth, grinding his teeth at the thought of the blood which stains and denounces him; or this ruined gambler, who has torn off his wig and kerchief, and is crying on his knees, with closed teeth, and fist raised against heaven. Look again at this madhouse: the dirty idiot, with muddy face, filthy hair, stained claws, who thinks he is playing on the violin, and has a sheet of music for a cap; the religious madman, who writhes convulsively on his straw, with clasped hands, feeling the claws of the devil in his bowels: the naked and haggard raving lunatic whom they are chaining up, and who is tearing out his flesh with his nails. Detestable Yahoos who presume to usurp the blessed light of heaven, in what brain can you have arisen, and why did a painter sully our eyes with your picture?

It is because his eyes were English, and because the senses in England are barbarous. Let us leave our repugnance behind us, and look at things as Englishmen do, not from without, but

from within. The whole current of public thought tends here towards observation of the soul, and painting is dragged along with literature in the same course. Forget then the forms, they are but lines; the body is here only to translate the mind.[1] This twisted nose, these pimples on a vinous cheek, these stupefied gestures of a drowsy brute, these wrinkled features, these degraded forms, only make the character, the trade, the whim, the habit stand out more clearly. The artist shows us no longer limbs and heads, but debauchery, drunkenness, brutality, hatred, despair, all the diseases and deformities of these too harsh and unbending wills, the mad menagerie of all the passions. Not that he lets them loose; this rude, dogmatic, and Christian citizen handles more vigorously than any of his brethren the heavy club of morality. He is a beef-eating policeman charged with instructing and correcting drunken pugilists. From such a man to such men ceremony would be superfluous. At the bottom of every cage where he imprisons a vice, he writes its name and adds the condemnation pronounced by Scripture; he displays that vice in its ugliness, buries it in its filth, drags it to its punishment, so that there is no conscience so perverted as not to recognize it, none so hardened as not to be horrified at it.

Let us look well, these are lessons which bear fruit. This one is against gin: on a step, in the open street, lies a drunken woman, half naked, with hanging breasts, scrofulous legs; she smiles idiotically, and her child, which she lets fall on the pavement, breaks its skull. Underneath, a pale skeleton, with closed eyes, sinks down with a glass in his hand. Round about, dissipation and frenzy drive the tattered spectres one against another. A wretch who has hung himself sways to and fro in a garret. Gravediggers are putting a naked woman into a coffin. A starveling is gnawing a bare bone side by side with a dog. By his side little girls are drinking with one another, and a young woman is making her suckling swallow gin. A madman pitchforks his child, and raises it aloft; he dances and laughs, and the mother sees it.

Another picture and lesson, this time against cruelty. A young murderer has been hung, and is being dissected. He is

[1] When a character is strongly marked in the living face, it may be considered as an index to the mind, to express which with any degree of justness in painting, requires the utmost efforts of a great master.—"Analysis of Beauty."

there, on a table, and the lecturer calmly points out with his wand the places where the students are to work. At this sign the dissectors cut the flesh and pull. One is at the feet; the second man of science, a sardonic old butcher, seizes a knife with a hand that looks as if it would do its duty, and thrusts the other hand into the entrails, which, lower down, are being taken out to be put into a bucket. The last medical student takes out the eye, and the distorted mouth seems to howl under his hand. Meanwhile a dog seizes the heart, which is trailing on the ground; thigh-bones and skull boil, by way of concert, in a copper; and the doctors around coolly exchange surgical jokes on the subject which, piecemeal, is passing away under their scalpels.

Frenchmen will say that such lessons are good for barbarians, and that they only half like these official or lay preachers, De Foe, Hogarth, Smollett, Richardson, Johnson, and the rest. I reply that moralists are useful, and that these have changed a state of barbarism into one of civilization.